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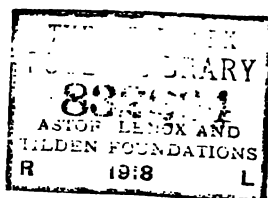
No 55

A DEFENCE
OF THE
TRINITARIAN SYSTEM,
IN TWENTY-FOUR SERMONS:
IN WHICH
THE LEADING CONTROVERSIAL POINTS
BETWEEN
TRINITARIANS AND ANTI-TRINITARIANS,
ARE STATED AND DISCUSSED.

—
BY DAVID HARROWAR, A. M.
—

UTICA:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM WILLIAMS

—
1822.
—



Northern District of New-York, 58.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the fifth day of June, in the forty-sixth year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1822, DAVID HARROWAR, of the said District, has deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Author, in the words following, to wit:

"A Defence of the Trinitarian System, in Twenty-four Sermons; in which the leading controversial points between Trinitarians and Anti-Trinitarians, are stated and discussed. By David Harrowar. A. M."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also to the act, entitled "An act supplementary to an act, entitled 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefit thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints."

RICHARD R. LANSING,

Clerk of the Northern District of New-York.

PREFACE.

THE following discourses were preached in Trenton, Oneida County, N. Y. in the years 1817 and 1818. Anti-Trinitarianism had prevailed there, through a series of years, almost from the commencement of its settlement, to the time when these sermons were delivered.

As the author resided in that town, and officiated as a gospel minister, for the space of seven years, he deemed it his incumbent duty, to oppose this pernicious heresy, and defend the Trinitarian system. These sermons were written and delivered for the instruction of the congregation, of which the author had the ministerial charge, and without any view to their publication. It must be acknowledged, that the subject discussed, is very copious and highly interesting; and it has occupied the thoughts and the pens of the most able divines, through many ages. It is a thing well understood, that there is a great opposition, at present, made to Trinitarian principles, by men who are classed under various names. It is highly necessary, therefore, that divine truth should be vindicated in the spirit of meekness, and the fallacy of the opposite errors pointed out, with the evils which attend them in time and eternity. Many, however, appear to be greatly opposed to, what they call, controversy; but the advocates of a false theology, are never backward in exhibiting their views, and unless they are met in the field of argument, errors must prevail, and the glorious truths of Heaven suffer by the dereliction.

It is a mournful fact, that controversy is frequently improperly conducted, and great animosities occasioned by it; but this grows out of the depravity of our hearts. An opponent should never be misrepresented, nor be treated with severity and contempt. In a theological dispute, truth, and not mere victory, should be the grand object. The author can truly say, that for many of the Anti-Trinitarians in Trenton, he entertains a very high regard, as gentlemen of character and talents. It is not from any personal ill will to that people, that the following discourses were preached, and now published; but if he knows his heart, from a regard to the truth, the glory of God, and the salvation of men. From some of his opponents, he has received such marks of friendship and attention, as he cannot but remember with pleasure and gratitude, and hopes to do so, through life.

Such is the opposition to Trinitarian doctrines, in the present age, that their defence has called into action the elegant and powerful pens of a Wardlaw in Scotland; Worcester, Steward, Woods and Miller in America, who have all exhibited in this glorious cause, a becoming Christian zeal, extensive learning, and *much force of argument*. These gentlemen have done honor to themselves—to the cause of the Redeemer, and to those sections of Christendom, in which they reside—they have conferred on the Church, now and in all future ages, the high obligation of gratitude and esteem.

If it should be asked, why are not their writings on the subject, sufficient, without troubling the world with the following sheets? The author replies; It is not because he supposes himself to have equalled the productions which have been mentioned. The subject, however, may be presented in various lights, and some benefit may be derived from them all. The shape which is given to this work,

is very different from that of most other authors; and perhaps, it may be read by some, into whose hands, other books of this kind, might never have fallen. It is with a considerable degree of diffidence, however, that the author of this publication, has ventured to make his appearance, as a writer in the world. He is very sensible of the magnitude of the subject; and that his ability to do it justice, may be inadequate to the undertaking. Had no other reason, however, existed in his mind, but the desire of appearing as an author, his manuscripts would have been confined to his own library, through life. But a train of circumstances, which need not be related, left him no choice in this case. In passing the ordeal of learned criticism, he has not the vanity to think the work invulnerable.

Such as it is, it is now offered to the Christian public, with the author's sincere prayer, that it may contribute something to the honor of God—to the support of the truth—to the edification of the saints—to the conviction of sinners; and to the confutation of the deleterious errors, against which it is levelled. But, if it should be judged by the Orthodox, the candid, the pious, and the discerning part of men, to be weak, assuming, or not adapted to effect the object for which it is designed; he hopes that it will serve to promote his humility.—To God, and to his Church, it is, therefore, humbly and prayerfully submitted.

It is no small gratification to the author, that he has received such a liberal subscription; and he feels himself under the high obligation of gratitude to those gentlemen and ladies, who have appeared as the patrons of his work. As the appearance of these discourses, has depended entirely upon them, the author takes this method of expressing his cordial thanks, for their confidence, hoping that their expectations may be fully answered.

Among the list of his subscribers, he feels himself under peculiar obligation to that *dear people*, who heard these sermons delivered from the desk. No other town has given such an extensive and generous encouragement to this publication. As the sermons were written and preached for their benefit, they are now offered to them, as a memorial of the author's sincere regard. It is his ardent prayer, that they may be useful to them, and to their dear children, when they shall hear his voice no more. If he knows his heart, it was one leading motive for his first going into that town, that he might have an opportunity to do something, in his ministerial capacity, to vindicate the Divinity and atonement of Christ, and their kindred doctrines. He has reason, however, to mourn, that he has not done more service to the glorious cause, for which the Infinite Redeemer died. The author has no claim on God—no plea to make, but unworthiness—no other ground to hope but the Sovereign mercy of JEHOVAH; through the atoning blood of “the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.” To His blessing, therefore, the following sheets are prayerfully resigned, by the author,

DAVID HARROWAR.

Utica, June 4, 1822.

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SERMON I.



I JOHN, V. 7.

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost : and these three are one.



MUCH has been said and written in the Christian world on this interesting passage. The opposers of the doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity, have labored to make it appear, that it is spurious—the insertion of an uninspired pen. They do not, however, undertake to inform us, when this text was added to the Holy Scriptures, nor what particular person, or number of persons, committed the forgery. To impress the public mind with the idea, that the words under consideration have been interpolated, is certainly very important for Anti-Trinitarians; for, if the divinity of this passage is admitted, the doctrine of a Trinity of persons in God, is at once established. It must be expected, therefore, that every argument which is calculated to shake its sacred authority, will be eagerly seized by them and improved to their own advantage.

In every age, they have displayed more zeal and assiduity, to overthrow the belief of a plurality of Persons in the Divine essence, than the friends of that doctrine have done for its establishment. This may be easily accounted for on the principle, that man by nature is totally depraved. The enemies of divine truth, oppose it with

all their heart; but the best of the saints are only its *imperfect* friends; for they “are sanctified” but “in part.”

Sinners, however, are more consistent with themselves; for as the Holy Scriptures state, they “are wise to do evil; but, to do good, they have no knowledge.” The cause of error, has always been vindicated with ardor, and talents. When it is *lost* it is not, in general, for the want of an indefatigable, and learned defence. If there had never been any opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity, it is highly probable that the inspiration of the text before us would never have been called in question. It must be allowed, that if it is the word of God, its divine authority ought to be vindicated on fair and candid principles.

There is no place, in which a proper defence of the text in dispute is more necessary than in *this* town; for opposition to the belief of a Triune God, has taken a strong stand here for a number of years. All, however, that has been said and written to prove that the passage before us is an insertion; with all the concessions which have been made by Trinitarians on the subject, have failed of producing in my mind a conviction of its spuriousness: I still believe it to be the fruit of divine inspiration—the *real* word of God. To shew the reasons for this belief, will be a leading object in the subsequent investigation. I have no other apology for undertaking an examination of this subject, than that it appears to be necessary, here; and that I feel disposed to do it all the justice that lies within my power; the extent of which must be submitted to the candid judgment of my hearers. It would be inadmissible for me to *boast*, either of my talents or advantages; and to depreciate them, is unnecessary. I shall speak to you as unto wise men, whose province it is to judge according to the evidence laid before you. That the important subject may be fairly canvassed, it is de-

I. To explain the doctrine which is obviously contained in the text,

II. Show its agreement with the Holy Scriptures in general. And,

III. Adduce evidence for the divine authority of the passage. In conformity with this plan, I am,

I. To explain the doctrine which is obviously contained in the text.

To deny its inspiration, and then argue, as many do, that it is not a sufficient evidence of the Trinity in Unity, is an extraordinary and vain attempt. If it is an insertion, as the Anti-Trinitarians contend, it was surely the design of the inserter, to have it received as an unquestionable proof of that doctrine. If it were not in itself a decisive passage, we have reason to believe, that there would have been less contention respecting it, in the christian world. Its real import, however, is very apparent, to the most superficial observer.

In defence of its proper meaning, we may observe,

1. That it speaks of *three*, who reside in heaven, who are expressly called, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost. It will not be doubted, that the *Father* is that God, who possesses all possible perfection and glory. By the *Word*, the Son of God is undoubtedly intended, who is called the Lord Jesus Christ, and is the acknowledged Savior of men. He is frequently called the *Word*, in the Holy Scriptures. To labor this point, at present, is therefore, unnecessary. It must be admitted that *he* is a real Person, and distinct from the Person of the Father. That these *two* are now in heaven, and were in it in the days of St. John, is a truth not to be doubted.

The third Person mentioned in the text, is called the Holy Ghost. His personality is confessedly denied, by all who appropriate to themselves the dignified name of

Unitarians. It is sufficient to my present purpose, however, to show, that he is, in the passage before us, considered as a Person, and distinct from the Father and the Son. To view the Holy Ghost, as being only an attribute, or operation of the Deity, when he is represented as actually bearing witness with two real Persons, is a thing utterly inadmissible. No doubt can remain, that the text in debate explicitly declares the doctrine of three distinct agents in heaven, who bear the glorious names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This is all which is incumbent on me to show, under the present particular.

2. These three illustrious Persons are said, in the text, to bear a distinct witness or record. To "bear record," is a solemn testimony. This is evident from that saying of John the Baptist respecting Jesus Christ, "I saw, and bear record, that this is the Son of God." A proper witness must be a rational agent; and on this ground it is said in scripture, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established." If the Holy Spirit is not a *Person*, but a divine perfection or energy, it is remarkable that this should be represented as bearing witness with two real intelligent agents. It is very evident that *this* is not the meaning of the words in question. If the author intended to convey such an idea, he has given his readers no intimation of it, and on that account we must view him as having been very unhappy in the selection of his words. But, if he meant to speak of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as *three* distinct Persons, or agents, then his language is perspicuous and forcible. If the text is an insertion, the inserter, undoubtedly, was a Trinitarian, and intended to speak of these three witnesses in heaven as distinct agents. We need not hesitate in saying, that this is the literal and obvious import of the passage, whether it is viewed as spurious or genuine. To settle


this point, is all that is necessary under the present subdivision; and this, I may now consider as being sufficiently evinced.

3. It is said in the text, that the "*three* who bear record in heaven, *are one*." An understanding of this point is of vast importance; and, therefore, a careful and clear explanation is requisite. It is not the design of the writer, to inform his readers, that the three witnesses in heaven, are one, *merely* in respect to the truth of their testimony. He appears to be very particularly guarded on this point; distinguishing between the witnesses on earth, "the Spirit, the water, and the blood," and the "three who bear record in heaven." Concerning the first class of witnesses, he says, "and these three *are one*;" but of the second, he states, "and these three *agree in one*." That "the Spirit, the water, and the blood, *are one*, only in regard to the nature and truth of their testimony, is clearly the object of the writer; for he does not say of the three who bear record in heaven, that "they *agree in one*;" but that they "*are one*." It is very mysterious to some people, as they say, to see how three can be *one*, and one *three*. Declining a humble and candid examination, they have the temerity to pronounce the sublime doctrine of a Trinity in Unity, an absurdity—an absolute contradiction.

We are ready to acknowledge that this would be true, if it were said, that they are *three* and *one*, in the same sense; but this is not the case. There is a sense in which they are really *three*, and there is a sense in which they are actually *one*. To communicate this incomprehensible and glorious mystery, was, undoubtedly, the serious intention of the writer of 1 John 5. 7. No words could be better chosen, to express the doctrine of a Triune God. It has been the business of Unitarians, in all ages, that

these passages of holy writ, are expressed in a very singular phraseology, if God is, in *no* respect, more than *one* person. In particular that remarkable expression, "the man is become as *one* of *us*." There is no other way of evading its force, but by supposing that the infinite God, in this case, associates the angels with himself: But, it would be infinitely beneath the dignity of the Lord of Hosts, to associate with himself the most exalted of created beings, in so important a consultation as that which concerned the creation of man. It may truly be said in relation to that event, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?"

If there are three Persons in *one* Godhead, the passages which have been quoted above, are phrased in a very proper manner; but if the case is otherwise, they are framed in very strange and inadmissible language. The very names of the Father, Son, and Spirit, are certainly given to these divine persons, in the Old Testament Scriptures. Concerning God, it is said in Jer. 31. 9, "I am a Father to Israel;" and in Mal. 11. 10, "Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" There is one mentioned in the second Psalm, to whom it is said, in the 7th verse, "Thou art my *son*." To convince us that he possesses divine perfections as well as the Father, it is said to mankind in the close of that Psalm, "Kiss the *Son*, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." It is then added, "Blessed are all they that put their *trust* in him." Seeing, that we are strictly forbidden, to trust in any being in heaven or on earth but God, this command from on high, establishes the proper and eternal Deity of that glorious Person who is emphatically called *the Son*.

With regard to him, who is denominated in the text, the Holy Ghost, which is but  for Spirit, much is

said in the Old Testament. In the 51st Psalm David saith unto God, "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me." We read also, in Isa. 63. 10, "That Israel rebelled, and vexed God's Holy Spirit." The *personality* and eternal Deity of the *Spirit*, might be easily proved from the writings of Moses and the prophets ; but the present object is, simply to show, that the Jewish Scriptures agree exactly with the writer of 1 John, 5. 7, respecting the *three* who are in heaven, and the very names which they bear. I am not under the necessity, of proceeding any further, in discussing this particular point in the general subject.

The *three* who bear record in heaven, with their appropriate names, are repeatedly and expressly mentioned in the New Testament. The Apostles were solemnly commissioned to baptize the christian converts in the name of each Person in the Divine essence. The phraseology of their commission has a strict accordance with the very words of the text in question. The express words now referred to, are these, "Go ye—and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." It cannot be doubted, that the *Father* is largely spoken of in the Scriptures—that he is in heaven, and is truly God ; and so far, 1 John 5. 7, certainly agrees with the Bible in general. "The *Son*," who is called the "*Word*," in our text, is also called by that name, in several other places of the divine oracles. It is said, in the first chapter of John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word *was* God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made *by him* ; and without *him* was not any thing made that was made. In *him* was life ; and the life was the light of men. This account exactly agrees with the statement of Moses, respecting the creation of all things ; and the apostle John, evidently alludes

to that portion of the sacred history. Moses writes, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;" and the apostle says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word *was* God." This apostolical assertion clearly explains the meaning of Moses, in saying, "And God said, Let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness;" and, "the man is become as *one of us*."

The *Word*, is one of the names of the second Person, in the eternal and ever blessed Trinity. As St. John states, he was "in the beginning *with* God, and *was* God." That this glorious *Word* became personally united to the man Christ Jesus, appears with great clearness, from John 1. 14. "And the *Word* was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory." In 1 John 5. 7, it is said, that this mysterious *Word* is now bearing record in heaven, with the Father. That this *Word* is a Person, and not *merely* a perfection or energy of the Deity, very fully appears from Rev. 19. In that portion of Scripture, the writer says, "I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called *Faithful* and *True*, and in righteousness doth he judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called, The *Word of God*." In a subsequent verse of this chapter, it is added, "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."

The above description can apply to no other being but the Almighty. The *Word*, therefore, *was* God, is *now* God, and will *be* God *forever*. In respect to the Father and Word, 1 John 5. 7, agrees perfectly with the Scrip-

tures in general. We must likewise view the Holy Ghost to be a person, bearing record in heaven, as we are baptized in *his* name, and by a divine command, as well as in the names of the Father, and of the Son. These *three* are also distinctly mentioned in that inspired benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." The point under consideration, is, I think, fully evinced.

2. Is it said, in our text, that "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, bear *record* in heaven?" This is in perfect harmony with the general testimony of the Holy Scriptures.

The grand truths, to which these divine Persons bear record, are, the Deity of the Son—his atonement, and the great salvation which results from these, to believers. The record of the Father, in respect to these things, is expressly mentioned in Math. 3. 16, 17. After the baptism of Jesus, we read, "And lo, the heavens were opened unto him : and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Another testimony of the Father, in respect to the Son, is recorded in Math. 17. The solemn scene was displayed on the mount ; and while Christ was transfigured, and Moses and Elijah appeared, the evangelist states, that a bright cloud overshadowed them : and behold, a voice out of the cloud which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased : hear ye him." We find another express witness of this nature, mentioned in John 12. 28. When Jesus was about being delivered up into the hands of his enemies, he said, "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have glorified it, and will glorify it again."

That the *Word* bears record in heaven, with the Father, appears from Acts 7. 56. In that passage, the dying Ste-

phen says, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." The record which the Word bears in heaven, is likewise mentioned in the ninth chapter of Acts. We are informed there, that as Saul journeyed to Damascus, to execute his persecuting intentions, "suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven;" and when he had fallen "to the earth, he heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." The meaning of his communication, evidently, is, "You are opposing an infinitely glorious Being; and destroying an important cause." The *Word* bears a farther testimony to his own proper Deity, by proclaiming in the hearing of St. John, with a voice like the sound of a trumpet, "I am Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last"—"I am he that liveth, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive forever more, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Rev. 1. 2, 18.

The *record* which the Holy Ghost bears to the Deity of Christ, is also clearly stated in the Scriptures. This was done in his descending in the form of a dove, and resting on the head of Jesus. In respect to this, John the Baptist, testifies, "I saw the Spirit descending like a dove, and it abode upon him." The Holy Ghost bore a farther testimony from heaven, in favor of the Deity and atonement of Christ, on the day of Pentecost, by filling the house, where his apostles were sitting, with "a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind;" and resting on their heads, as cloven tongues of fire. Acts 2. 2, 3. By his Almighty operations, they were all inspired to proclaim salvation through Jesus Christ, to mankind. He is still bearing record from heaven, by awakening, regenerating, sanctifying and sealing the souls of men, to eternal glory.

The Scriptures do, therefore clearly represent the Father, the Word or Son, and the Holy Ghost, as bearing record in heaven, and thus co-operating in our salvation.

Much more evidence of their united record, *in* and *from* heaven, might be easily adduced ; but sufficient has been said, to shew the agreement of 1 John 5. 7, with the Holy Scriptures in general.

SERMON II.

I JOHN, V. 7.

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

IN the preceding discourse, this text was very particularly explained, in conformity with the first head of the grand division. We have also passed through a part of the second head, in showing the agreement of this disputed passage with the Scriptures in general. Under the last mentioned division, it was evinced,

1. That the Old Testament and the New, unite in declaring with 1 John 5. 7, that there are three in heaven, bearing the names of the Father, of the Word, or Son, and of the Holy Ghost. It was likewise shown,

2. In part, that the Scriptures at large agree, that the glorious *three* in heaven unite in witnessing to the divinity and atonement of the Word, and to the salvation of believers through his powerful intercession.

The way is now prepared to proceed with a farther illustration of this general head of the interesting subject.

Therefore,

3. Is it said in our text, that the three who bear record in heaven, *are one?*" This is the united voice of all the sacred writings.

The *unity* of God is an established doctrine in the inspired volume, and is a dictate of natural as well as revealed religion. It is said in the writings of Moses, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is *one Lord*." Deut. 6. 4. The great Jehovah saith, by Isaiah his prophet, "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me." Isa. 45. 5. This doctrine is clearly revealed in the Old Testament, from the commencement to the close. The New Testament exhibits the same important truth, with equal perspicuity. St. Paul, in his epistles, says, "To us there is but one God." 1 Cor. 8. 6. Again; "For there is one God. 1 Tim. 2. 5. In Gal. 3. 20, he says also, God is *one*."

More testimony on this head, is unnecessary; and we rejoice to find, that it has been the settled belief of pious and well informed minds, in all periods of time. In connexion with what has been said, we argue, If the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, possess, each, undivided existence, independence and unlimited perfections, it will necessarily follow that they are the same in essence, and one God. The *unity* of the Divine essence, and the *Trinity* of persons in God, are doctrines, revealed without any obscurity in the lively oracles of heaven.

Is it said in 1 John 5. 7,—"*These three are one?*" the Lord Jesus Christ himself, uses the same phraseology in John 10. 30; "I and my Father *are one*." He assures us in the 14th chapter of the same book, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." "I am *in* the Father, and the Father *in* me."

In the 1st chap. and 18th verse, it is said, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is *in the bosom* of the Father, he hath declared him."

As it is asserted, that "no man hath seen God at any time;" it must be the Father who is meant; for, all who

are conversant with the sacred writings, must know, that the God of Israel had often appeared unto men.

In this view of the case, we may clearly perceive, that it was *Christ* who said unto Abraham, "I am the Almighty God ; walk before me, and be thou perfect." In John 1. 18. it is solemnly denied that any man had ever seen the Father ; but in Gen. 17. 1, it is clearly stated, "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared unto Abram and said unto him, I am the Almighty God." *Christ*, therefore, must be the Almighty God, on the fairest principles of reasoning. This being admitted, irresistibly proves that he is *one* with the Father in essence, as well as testimony ; which is the very doctrine contained in the text under consideration. If the Father and the Word, are two distinct Persons, in one simple essence, it is easy to see, that the Holy Ghost *may* also be a Person, in the same undivided Godhead. He is certainly ranked with the Father and the Word, in 1 John 5. 7, as a distinct agent, but of the same substance, and equal in perfections and glory :—and with this statement, all Scripture agrees.

The opposers of the Trinity profess to believe, that the Spirit is *not* a distinct Person in God, but is either one of the names of the Father, or else, merely one of his perfections or operations. But if *their* sentiment be correct, how shall we understand the commission which Christ gave to his ministers respecting baptism ? It must be understood in this sense, "You shall baptize your proselytes in the name of the Father, who is truly God, and in the name of the Son, who is a *mere creature* : and again, either in the name of the Father, or else, in the name of one of his attributes or operations. According to this doctrine, the same inconsistency and tautology is embraced in the apostle's benediction, with which divine worship is closed in all our congregations.

It is to us, however, a consolation, that the whole Bible, accords with the statement made in 1 John 5. 7. That the Spirit is distinct from the Father and the Word, as a Person, and yet one with them in essence, and in every divine perfection and glory. We know, that the Holy Spirit is spoken of in all the Scriptures, as being God, possessing an eternal, independent existence, and almighty power. The apostle Peter said to Ananias, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost?—thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Acts 5. 3, 4.

In respect to the duration of the Spirit's existence, St. Paul says, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the *eternal* Spirit offered himself to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living God." If the Spirit is *eternal*, it sufficiently proves his independence, for there could be no antecedent being, to operate as a cause of his existence. To labor for farther proof on *this* point, would be a waste of time.

That the divine Spirit possesses almighty power, the works ascribed to him expressly testify. In speaking of the creating power of Jehovah, Job says, "By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens." Job 26. 13. At the commencement of creation, Moses states, that "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." Gen. 1. 2. In relation to the great variety of pestiferous creatures, which were to devour the land of Edom, and to possess it forever, the prophet Isaiah says, God's "mouth it hath commanded, and his *Spirit* it hath gathered them." Isa. 34. 18.

Creating the heart of man *anew*, is the work of the Spirit, and it is as great a work as the creating of the world, requiring no less power. It is said in John 3. 5. "Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" and, that event is called by St. Paul, being "*created* in Christ Jesus unto good works."

But as Anti-Trinitarians contend that the Holy Spirit is either the Father himself, or his power personified, more evidence of this kind is unnecessary. If the things which have been mentioned of the Holy Ghost are true, and his distinct personality from the Father and the Word, has been made to appear, then the doctrine contained in our text agrees with the Scriptures ; which is now the only point in question.

As that point is sufficiently settled, I shall proceed in conformity with my general plan, to adduce,

III. The evidence of the divine authority of the text in dispute.

From the view we have taken of the Scriptures in general, it fully appears, that our contested text, contains no false doctrine, whether it is spurious or genuine. This may be justly considered, as a strong presumptive argument in favor of its inspiration. We are not, however, reduced to the necessity of resting its authenticity on that argument alone, although its weight is great. But in entering into a connected series of evidence, in favor of the divine authority of 1 John, 5. 7, we may observe,

1. That its strict connection with the rest of the chapter, evinces this.

If it were inserted by an uninspired pen, it would surely disturb and weaken the apostle's reasoning, instead of elucidating his subject, or strengthening his argument. This does not appear to be the case ; for, if the text were removed from its present position, the force of his reasoning would be greatly enervated. It is evidently his object, in ver. 6, to shew, that " Jesus Christ come by water and blood." In this saying, he undoubtedly alludes to the blood and water, which issued from the Redeemer's side, when it was pierced with the spear. By that precious blood, an atonement was made for sin ; and, the-

water was an emblem of the purifying influence of the Spirit, which is poured out on men, in consequence of his death on the cross. This contested passage, evidently holds a close connection with the last part of verse 6, and the whole of verse 8. In the first part of verse 6, the apostle says, "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood." The close of the verse says, "and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three *are one*. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood: and these three *agree in one*."

The text in debate, stands connected with the preceding verse, by the word "for;" and with the following verse, with the copulative conjunction, "and." It falls into its present position, therefore, with peculiar facility.

It has been made to appear from the Scriptures in general, that there are three such witnesses in heaven, as are mentioned in verse 7; and, it certainly forms a strong and beautiful union in testimony, with the witnesses in earth, which are spoken of in verse 8.

That we may perceive the force of this reasoning more fully, let the words of verse 6 and verse 8 be stated, leaving out the supposed insertion:—"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood: and these three *agree in one*."

In reading the apostle's statement in this manner, there evidently appears to be a great deficiency; but, in reading it with the pretended interpolation, there is neither falsehood nor redundancy. Dr. Scott, in his note on the text

says, "It may be doubtful, whether the passage connects with so much propriety, if the contested words be omitted, as it otherwise does : for if we read with the copies in which they are wanting," "The Spirit beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth : for there are three that bear record, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood," &c. "there seems to be a remarkable repetition, and a want of the apostle's usual energy in the passage."

I have seen this argument, set in a very powerful light by the pen of a learned Deist, in an address to Unitarians ; but, I cannot, at present, quote his words.* I shall now submit the point, to the judgment of my hearers, without pursuing it any farther, at present.

2. It may be argued, that 1 John 5. 7, is a genuine text, from the similarity of the style and doctrine of St. John's other writings. In the very commencement of his gospel, he calls the Lord Jesus Christ the *Word*; and he gives him the same appellation, in the book of Revelation. The Son of God, is not called the Word by any other sacred writer.

It appears that this apostle, was very particular in all his writings in teaching the personality, divinity, and record, of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and, also, their Unity in *one* glorious essence. These facts, were

* In connection with the above argument for the genuineness of this verse from the connection, another may be added which appears in the Greek, but is not seen in the English translation. In the last clause of the 8th verse, "and these three agree in one," the article is used before *one*. Middleton, in his essay on the Greek article, lays it down as a rule, that the article is used in such cases for one of two purposes, that of *hypothesis* or that of *reference*. It is plain that its use in this place cannot be *hypothetic*. It must therefore, be used by way of reference. But to what can it refer? There is nothing to which it can refer, if the 7th verse is left out. If that is inserted, the reference is plain. The testimony of the three that bear witness on earth agrees in the same one thing which is asserted in the 7th verse, namely, the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity. (See *Panoplist* for 1811, p. 541.

fully substantiated, under the second general head of this subject.

This apostle was also much in the habit of vindicating Christ's proper Deity, and equality with the Father. In 1 John 5. 20, he says of him, "This is the true God, and eternal life." This completely establishes all that is contained in the text in question.

But as the opposers of a Trinity in Unity, profess to esteem the talents and candor of Dr. Doddridge, I shall cite a note of his, on the words, "This is the true God, and eternal life." He says, "To paraphrase this of the true religion as a celebrated divine does, is quite enervating the force of Scripture, and taking a liberty with plain words, by no means to be allowed. It is an argument of the *Deity* of *Christ*, which almost all those who have wrote in its defence, have urged, and which, I think, none who have opposed it, have so much as *appeared* to answer." These remarks are very pointed, and made by him, whom the Unitarians acknowledge to be candid, pious and learned. But, if the Deity of Christ be a Scriptural doctrine, the statement in 1 John 5. 7, stands as fast as the pillars of heaven. The style and doctrine, of this disputed passage, exactly agree with the style, character, and sentiment of St. John. We have no right, therefore, to consider it as being an insertion, unless the thing can be positively proved, which, no one pretends, has ever been done. It is on the ground of negative proof, that its enemies are striving to erase it from the Bible. A learned divine, observes, "Negative evidence has, in determining the judgment of a candid mind, but little weight. One *positive* fact, well supported, is of more importance than a thousand negations."

In defending the authenticity of the text in debate, I proceed to observe,

3. That there does not appear to have been any necessity, of committing such a forgery. If the text was inserted, it must have been done for the purpose of supporting the Trinity. No sufficient motive for this can be made to appear; for the Scriptures in general, contain plenary evidence of that doctrine. Every one, who is not biassed against that glorious truth, must be convinced of it, by reading the Bible, independent of this contested text; and those men who lean to their *own* understanding, and prefer what they call reason, to Revelation, would not acknowledge the doctrine, if a thousand such passages as 1 John 5. 7, were to be found in the Scriptures, and without any objection to their authenticity.

Mr. Robinson, who was converted to Anti-Trinitarianism by Dr. Priestley, observes, in his "History of Baptism," page 47, concerning Unitarians, "*The sufficiency of reason is the soul of their system.*" See Fuller's Letters, page 298. On this ground divine Revelation is unnecessary; and, whenever it is consulted, it must bow to the dictates of reason. To forge a passage, for the conviction of gentlemen of this cast, would amount to very little, for every doctrine of Scripture, must be tried at the bar of their own reasoning. Humble inquirers, however, will easily be convinced, that the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity is, the Alpha and Omega of Revelation—the grand hinge, on which, every one of its doctrines turns.

4. It is a powerful argument in favor of the passage in debate, that to have forged it, would have been a heinous crime, and attended with great danger. If there were any piety among the orthodox, when such a sentence was inserted in the epistle of John; they would surely have detected and exposed the guilty. Such an addition to the Holy Scriptures, would have subjected the impious agent, or agents, to these solemn threatenings, in the book of

God ; " For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." Rev. 22. 18. " Every word of God is pure."—" Add thou not unto his word, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." Prov. 30. 5, 6. Surely, no one *would* be willing to expose himself to divine anger, and to the detestation and reproofs of men, who had any fear of God before his eyes ; and a man of different character, would have no motive to vindicate the doctrine of the Trinity. Such an interpolater, *must* have anticipated these painful events.

It is difficult to see, how it was any more possible to have inserted this passage in any past period of time, without being detected, than it would be at present. Friends and enemies, have always been eyeing the Holy Scriptures very closely. If any person, church, or, denomination, had in fact, made such an addition to the sacred canon, it must have been discovered, and he, or they, exposed to the merited contempt of the whole christian world. We ought not to think so meanly of the church of God, as that they would universally, and silently, have suffered such a criminal forgery, even, if all the enemies of truth had consented to shut their mouths, in respect to the crime.

It is said by respectable authority, that the Jews were so careful in preserving *their* Scriptures from being corrupted, " that, when copies of the Law or the Prophets were transcribed, they observed the most scrupulous exactness : they not only diligently compared the one with the other, but even counted the number of letters in each book, and compared and recorded the numbers." We need not doubt, but the christian church, has taken *some* care in this respect, as well as the Jewish church. The same Holy Providence has, no doubt, watched over the Scriptures in

every age, to preserve them from corruption. The Lord of Hosts, is "the Shepherd and the Stone of Israel;" and, "he doth, neither slumber nor sleep," in guarding the concerns of his kingdom, and securing the honor of his own glorious and eternal name.

5. The entire silence of Anti-Trinitarians, in ancient times, in relation to the spuriousness of the text in question, is an argument of great weight, in favor of its authenticity.

We *must* believe, that if the text in debate, be an interpolation, it is not of modern date.

Mr. Emlyn, in his "Enquiry into the original authority of 1 John 5. 7," states, that the christian world, "had it not in their Bibles, for above 700 years." If this be a fact, it must have been inserted in some copy, or copies, of the sacred writings, as early as the beginning of the eighth century. On this calculation, it must have existed for as long as 1000 years. This is a sufficient proof of my argument, that if the passage has been inserted, it is an *ancient* crime. If there was no debate among christians at that time, about the doctrine of the Trinity, to insert such a text, was unnecessary: but, if that thing *was* then disputed, those, who did it, would, undoubtedly, have proclaimed to the world its spuriousness. Justice to themselves, must have forbidden their silence. If such an event had transpired, there would have been some account of it transmitted down to us. A learned debate, on the authority of this passage, as far back as the 8th or 9th century, would throw great light on the subject.

Many ancient manuscripts, existed then, which have since perished by the devouring hand of time. It is very possible, that the autograph of St. John, might have been *then* produced. No doubt the church, would have preserved *that*, as an authentic copy, and as a memorial, of

one of the dearest servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. A sight of the original, must have settled all controversy on the subject at once. As the Scriptures then, were all in manuscripts, and not very ancient, the difficulty might have been canvassed with more certainty, than it can be now. Perhaps, it was on that very account, that Anti-Trinitarians chose to let the matter rest, until a more auspicious age, should favor the undertaking. If they could show by authentic records, when this text was inserted, by what hands, and for what purpose, the victory would be their's. If the thing were as they pretend, this could be done ; but, as no one attempts it, we have a right to consider this controverted passage, as being genuine, until it is proved to be otherwise, by positive testimony. In examining this subject, it will be made to appear, that the evidence, on which, they set aside, the words in question, is purely negative ; and, to this, I hope, to be able to oppose *much positive proof*, in my next discourse.

E

SERMON III.



I JOHN, V, 7.

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.



ON a former occasion, two discourses were delivered from this celebrated text. The general arrangement which was adopted in the outset of the subject was, to explain the doctrine contained in this passage—to show its agreement with the Scriptures at large—and then, adduce evidence for the divine authority of the text itself.

The two first heads have been discussed, and some attention has been given to the third and last. Under that, it was argued.

1. That the divine authority of the text, appears from its strict connection with what precedes and follows it, in the chapter where it stands.

2. From the similarity of the style and doctrine, with the style and doctrine of St. John's other writings.

3. That there does not appear to have been any necessity on the part of the Orthodox, of committing such a forgery.

4. That to have forged the passage would have been a heinous crime, and attended with great danger.

5. That the entire silence of Anti-Trinitarians, in ancient times, in respect to the spuriousness of this text, is

an argument of great weight in favor of its authenticity.

The way is, therefore, prepared, to proceed to a further train of testimony, in favor of the *divinity* of 1 John 5. 7.

In doing this, it will be proper to show,

6. The grounds on which this passage is rejected, from the oracles of God.

In attending to this point, I shall endeavor to observe candor and accuracy, as far as I have obtained light on the subject. It has been noticed already, that it is on the ground of negative proof, that this text is declared to be spurious. On that account, its enemies have been very confident; and, by their triumphant language, many of the Orthodox have been, I think, unnecessarily shaken, in respect to its divine authority.

The main evidence which lies against the text in question, is this: It is wanting in many of the ancient manuscripts, and especially the Greek; and it is omitted in many of the earlier versions of the Holy Scriptures.

This fact we are not disposed to deny; neither do we consider the argument derived from it as unanswerable; and to this the attention of my hearers is now to be directed.

The most famous manuscripts existing at present are only transcripts of more ancient ones, which have perished in the lapse of ages. It is very easy, therefore, to see, that transcribers might have left out this text through inadvertence, or with a wicked design of embarrassing the doctrine of the Trinity. An omission in one manuscript, might have occasioned the want of this text in many others which were subsequently written. No doubt, many manuscripts and versions of the Scriptures, have been formed from the Alexandrian and Vatican copies, in which, this text, from some reason or other, has been omitted. It is a fact, well authenticated, that *some* of the ancient manu-

scripts have had this text in them, and that others have appeared, and still appear without it.

The Rev. William Jones, author of "The Catholic doctrine of a Trinity," in page 224 of "the first American edition," observes, "The divines of Lovain, having compared *many* Latin copies, found this text wanting but in *five* of them; and Robert Stephens found it retained in *nine* out of sixteen ancient manuscripts which he used." The probability is surely as great, that where this text is wanting in the ancient manuscripts and versions of Scripture, it might have been omitted through inadvertence, or erased with design, as that it was inserted in the copies where it *was* or *is* found. It is a fact, well known from ancient history, that many Anti-Trinitarians appeared very early in the Christian Church, whose hearts were highly embittered against the doctrine of the Trinity, and the supreme Deity of Christ. Ebion, Cerinthus, and Marcion, who had many followers, lived in and near the days of the apostles; and they were violent opposers to the doctrines which have been mentioned. Milner, in his Church History, observes concerning them, "While they acknowledged the excellence of the character of Jesus Christ, they considered him a *mere man*, descended from Mary and her husband Joseph. With such low ideas of the Redeemer's person, they denied the virtue of his atoning blood, and labored to establish justification by the deeds of the law. To be consistent with themselves, they rejected the divine authority of St. Paul's Epistles, and accused the apostle of being an Antinomian." See "Townsend's abridgment of Milner, page 56. Men of this description were full as likely to have erased 1 John, 5. 7. from the ancient manuscripts, as the orthodox Christians were to have inserted such a text. I am, however, of the opinion, that it was neither omitted nor inserted in that

period of time. There is no such charge exhibited against those ancient heretics by the Orthodox; neither do we find *them* complaining of such an addition having been made to the Holy Scriptures by their opponents. The original copy was, at that period, undoubtedly, in the possession of the Church; and a sight of it must have completely settled such a controversy. It was, therefore, an inauspicious era, to have omitted or inserted the passage under consideration. But, if either of these things *was* done, I think an *omission* of the text in writing manuscripts, the most probable, for these two weighty reasons, namely: First, The character of the Orthodox for piety, and veracity, *we* must believe, was not inferior to that of the Anti-Trinitarians; Secondly, It was *more* safe to omit a passage in transcribing the Scriptures, than to *make* and insert one. If such an omission had been noticed, and protested against, a very plausible apology could have been offered; namely, that it was a mistake, and not designed. No such plea could possibly have been made for an interpolator. The weakest reasoner on earth, must have seen at once, that from the guilt of *such* an action, it would have been impossible for him to have washed his hands. It is the most probable thing, therefore, that the early manuscripts of the New Testament were all either with or without, this contested passage. But, after the early manuscripts were all buried in the grave of time, and transcriptions had become numerous, no doubt it was then, that this text was either omitted or inserted. None of the ancient manuscripts, which are now in being, reach within many hundred years of the apostolic age. As the art of printing was then unknown, manuscripts of the Bible would be the most likely to increase, when the Christian religion was established in the Roman Empire, and had diffused itself extensively in the world. A mul-

tiplicity of transcriptions of the Holy Scriptures was then more practicable and necessary, than in any antecedent period. After the establishment of the Christian religion in the Roman Empire, Anti-Trinitarianism became very prevalent. Then the famous Arius arose, covering the Christian horizon with a cloud of Anti-Trinitarian delusion. He was, indeed, greatly opposed by the Orthodox, and by Constantine the Great; yet his sentiments spread extensively, and finally obtained a legal establishment. The sons of the Arian school were then under peculiar advantages to omit and erase the text which is now in debate.

Concerning this passage, Dr. Scott observes, "It is certainly wanting in many of the ancient versions and manuscripts: but whether the Trinitarians interpolated it, or the Arians and other Unitarians omitted it, is to this day a matter of controversy." He adds, "It is, however, more probable that the Anti-Trinitarians should silently omit, in their copies a testimony that was so decisive against them, or that it should be left out by the mistake of some ancient transcriber, than that the Trinitarians should directly forge and insert it." Ecclesiastical history testifies, that Anti-Trinitarianism prevailed in the Christian world, through the greater part of the fourth century, and almost the whole of the fifth. The votaries of that deleterious scheme, made every possible effort to crush the orthodox religion, and to promote their own views of theology. They had two distinguished sovereigns, who favored their cause, Constantius and Huneric. While the Arians were crimsoning the earth with the blood of orthodox Christians, and banishing their leading men into deserts and caves, we may well suppose that they would take some liberty also with the Holy Scriptures. In relation to this subject, Milner, in his Ecclesiastical History states, that "Huneric ordered, that no one should hold any

office in his dominions, who was not an Arian. He confiscated the property of the rejected Orthodox, and banished their persons. In the year 483, he commanded the Trinitarian ministers to meet the Arian clergy, at Carthage in Africa, to prove their faith, if they could, by the Scriptures." When they assembled at the appointed place, our historian says, "Huneric made no mention of the conference, for many days, and separated those of the greatest abilities from the rest, that he might on false pretences, put them to death. One of the most learned, named Laetus, he burned alive, to intimidate others. When the conference was opened, the Orthodox chose ten of their own number to answer for the rest. Cirila, the chief of the Arian bishops, was seated on a magnificent throne, with his partizans sitting in an exalted station, while the Orthodox continued standing below. The latter saw what a mock conference it was likely to prove, and remonstrated:—the Arians ordered one hundred bastinadoes to be given to each of them." Under such disingenuous treatment, poor Eugenius, lifted up his voice to heaven, saying, "God look down upon the violence offered us!" "They, however, presented a confession of their faith, in terms, expressive of Trinitarian doctrine." After this awful scene, "Huneric ordered them to be expelled from Carthage, stripped them of horses and change of raiment, and forbad any one to give them victuals or lodgings, under terrible penalties."

We may well suppose that *such* people were full as likely to omit, in transcribing, and to erase from the then existing manuscripts of Scripture, 1 John 5. 7, as the Orthodox were to insert it; seeing that of such an interpolation, there is not the shadow of *positive proof*.

The evidence, on which this text is rejected from the Holy Scriptures, has now been presented to your view,

at least as far as I am possessed of it, and, with the remarks which have been made on it, you must judge of its weight. This right is yours. I shall now proceed to state,

7. The opinions of some eminent commentators and divines, in respect to the authenticity of the text in question. That excellent Christian and divine, Dr. Doddridge, appears to be undetermined in respect to the sacred authority of this passage, but professes to have a full belief in the doctrine which it contains. He says, "I am persuaded the words contain an important truth; but whether they have been added by some, or omitted by others, contrary to the original copy, I will not pretend to determine." See his *Family Expositor*, Vol. 6, page 311. Dr. Scott's mind preponderates in favor of the divinity of the passage; rather choosing to believe, that "the Arians omitted it, in the copies where it is wanting, than that the Orthodox inserted it." For this opinion, he gives the following reasons, namely, that "the Trinitarian, in fact, would be deprived only of one argument, with which he might attempt the conviction of his opponent, if this were rejected as spurious; but if the testimony were admitted as the unerring word of God, all the ingenuity or diligence of his opponents, would scarcely suffice to explain it away, or to avoid the inference that must naturally be drawn from it, except by rejecting the apostle's testimony.

The celebrated Matthew Henry, in his commentary on the Scriptures, is full in his belief of the divinity of this text, and his remarks in its vindication, are copious and powerful. I have not had an opportunity of consulting Pool's *Annotations* on this text; but according to information, he is expressly in favor of its authenticity. The Rev. John Brown, of Haddington, author of the *Family Bible*, seems to have the highest confidence of the di-

vine authority of the text under consideration; commenting upon it, without taking the least notice of the controversy.

Dr. Emmons, who is an eminent divine, has published a sermon on this passage, without calling its inspiration in question. Surely, he would not have done this, if any scruple had rested on his mind, respecting its authenticity. His opportunity for information on this subject, and his ability to judge, are far from being small.

The famous Claudius Buchanan, D. D. author of "The Christian Researches," who has travelled extensively in the Eastern nations, with the view of making discoveries in favor of the Christian cause, expressly avows his belief in the genuineness of 1 John 5. 7.

The Rev. William Jones, in his "Catholic Doctrine of a Trinity," says, of this text, "I firmly believe it to be genuine for the following reasons:—1. St. Jerom, who had a better opportunity of examining the true merits of the cause than we can possibly have at this distance of time, tells us plainly, that he found out how it had been adulterated, mistranslated and omitted on purpose to elude the truth. 2. The Divines of Lovain having compared *many* Latin copies, found this text wanting but in *five* of them; and Robert Stephens found it retained in *nine* out of sixteen manuscripts which he used. 3. It is certainly quoted twice by St. Cyprian, who wrote before the council of Nice: and also by Tertullian. Dr. Clark, therefore, is not to be believed when he tells us, it was never cited by any of the Latins before St. Jerom. 4. The sense is not perfect without it; there being a contrast of three witnesses in heaven to three upon earth, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, whose testimony is called the witness of God; and the Spirit, the water and the blood, which being administered by the church upon earth, is called the

witness of men. He that desires to see this text farther vindicated from the malice of Faustus Socinus, may consult Pool's Synopsis, and Dr. Hammond; and also Dr. Delany, in his sermons." See the "Catholic Doctrine of a Trinity," page 124. By examining that page, you will find references made by Mr. Jones, to the proper authorities.

In addition to what has been said, I would just observe, that of the two authors, who have been mentioned by Mr. Jones, Cyprian and Jerom, the first lived in the third, and the second in the fifth century. Their testimony, therefore, is of great weight, in respect to the authenticity of the text in question.

It may, perhaps, shake the authority of the text in the view of some, that Mr. Wardlaw has not made use of it, in his discourses on the Socinian controversy. To this I reply, that he has *not* pronounced it to be an interpolation. He has not, indeed, grounded any argument upon it, because it was not his design to rely on *any* passage, to which an objection might be offered with a plausible appearance.

We admit that it is the opinion of the learned Griesbach, that 1 John, 5. 7, is an insertion; and no doubt this has shaken many minds, in respect to its authenticity. But with all his critical talents, and laborious investigation, he is not above the possibility of being mistaken. Many great and good men differ from him on this subject. But, I shall proceed,

8. To offer more proofs of the authenticity of this text, taken from ancient and authentic documents. These will be selected from the works of the Rev. George Travis, A. M. a distinguished Episcopalian divine. He commences by mentioning the writings of certain ancient and learned individuals.' He says, "Laurentus Valla, an Ital-

ian nobleman, of great erudition, was the first person who set himself to correct the Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. He lived in the fourteenth century, and by long continued exertions, he got into his hands seven Greek manuscripts. This passage of St. John was found in them *all*. In a commentary upon the Scriptures, by Nicholas De Lyra, this verse is found, accompanied by the learned author's annotations without expressing any suspicion of its authenticity.

In the thirteenth century, the commentary of St. Thomas appeared on this epistle, in which this verse is expounded without any insinuation of interpolation. In the same century, this text is found in the *Rationale* of divine offices, composed by the Bishops of Mende. In the twelfth century, Lombard, Bishop of Paris, expressly cites this verse, in the first book of his *Sentences*. It is quoted in the same century, by an eminent divine, in a treatise on the glorification of the Trinity. St. Bernard, in the eleventh century, insists on the verse, in several of his discourses. In, or about this age, Radulphus, Ardens, Huge Victorinus, with other authors, whose works have survived to the present time, referred to the text in question. The *Glossa Ordinaria*, was composed by a learned writer in the ninth century. In it, this verse is found, and commented upon with admirable force and perspicuity. The Greek manuscripts, which directed him to insert this verse in his text and commentary, must have been very ancient, not less than three or four hundred years old. It is thought that this famous commentary stands on the authority of Greek manuscripts more ancient than the Alexandrian manuscript, or any one now known in the world. Ambrose Ansbert, in the middle of the eighth century, wrote a comment upon the Apocalypse, in which this verse is applied, in explaining the 5th verse of the first chapter of the Rev-

elation. Etherius, Bishop of Uxome, in contending against the heretical opinions of Elipondus, quotes this verse in St. John. In the middle of the sixth century, Cassiodorus, wrote a commentary on the epistles, and in his annotations on this chapter, uses these words:—"In heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and *these three are one God.*" Fulgentius, an African Bishop of great celebrity, who lived in the beginning of the sixth century, cited this text as being a conclusive evidence against the tenets of Arius. A few years before Fulgentius, Vigilius another eminent Bishop, urges the testimony of this text against the Arian heresy.

"The famous Jerom, who lived in the beginning of the fourth century, in revising and settling the text, of the New Testament, solemnly declared, that he had adhered entirely to the Greek manuscripts; and in his Testament, this verse appears, without any doubt of its authenticity. He quoted it likewise, in his solemn confessions of faith.

"Augustine, a cotemporary of Jerom, in his writings, uses these expressions—"the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost *are one.*" About the same period of time, Marcus Celedensis, an African, in an exposition of the Christian faith, expresses himself thus: "To us there is one Father, and one Son, who is truly God, and one Holy Spirit, who is also truly God; and *these three are one:*"—the precise words of the verse in question. Phebadius was Bishop of Agen in Terence, in the fourth century. He cites this verse against the Arians. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, in 248, in a treatise, uses these words:—"It is written of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—*And these three are one.*" Tertullian, who is supposed to have been born about the time of St. John's death; or in the year 140, as some believe, in writing against one who denied a plurality of persons in the Godhead, alleges this

passage in St. John.—“*which three are one*”—a literal quotation of the text in debate.”

Thus, in the documents which have been produced, we have an account of no less than twenty-three authors, of great eminence, who lived from the second down to the fourteenth century, who all cited and referred to this disputed text. This, I think, is sufficient to satisfy the most doubtful mind.

But, to the evidence of individuals of such eminence, Mr. Travis, subjoins the testimony of councils, and other collective bodies of learned men.

He says, “The council of Lateran was held at Rome, under Innocent III. in 1215. Of all the assemblies, of this kind, the Christian world ever saw, this was the most numerous. It was composed of more than four hundred Bishops, with about eight hundred inferior clergy, and an equal number of deputies. The Greek Patriarchs of Constantinople and Jerusalem, were present. The chief purpose of convening this council, was, for the examination of certain opinions of a famous Italian divine, who was accused of Arianism. He was unanimously condemned by this august body, in whose public act, we find the verse now in question, set forth in these words:—“It is read in the canonical epistle of St. John, that, there are three who bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; *and these three are one.*”

“About the close of the eighth century, the Emperor Charlamagne, called together the learned of that age—instructing them to revise the manuscripts of the Bible then in use.—To effect this great purpose, he furnished these commissioners with every manuscript that could be procured in his extensive dominions. In their correctorium, the result of their united labors, the testimony of the *three* heavenly witnesses is read, without the smallest impeachment of its authenticity.

In the famous conference at Carthage, which has been already mentioned, the Orthodox in their own defence, left this protest,—“That it may appear more clear than the light, that the divinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, *is one*, see it proved by the Evangelist St. John, who writes thus: “There are three who bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and *these three are one.*”

This verse of St. John, is inserted in the ancient service-book of the Latin church; in the confession of faith of the Greek church, and in their liturgy. The ancient version of the New Testament, in the Armenian language, contains this verse. The most ancient of all the versions of the books of the New Testament, from the language in which they were originally written, is the Old Italic. This version was made in the first century, and, therefore, *while St. John was yet alive*; and was used by all the Latin churches in Europe, Asia, and Africa, for many centuries after his death.

“Thus, the origin of the verse in question, is, at length, carried up, not by inferences, or implications, alone, however fair and obvious, but by *plain* and *positive* evidence, to the age of St. John himself. For this *most valuable*, as well as *most ancient* version hath constantly exhibited the verse, 1 John, 5. 7, throughout the vast series of *one thousand and four hundred years*, which intervened between the days of Praxeas, and the age of Erasmus, not a single author whether Patripassian, Cerinthian, Ebionite, Arian, Macedonian, Sabellian, whether of the Greek or Latin, whether of the Eastern, or Western church—whether in Asia, Africa or Europe—hath ever taxed the various quotations of this verse—with interpolation or forgery. Such silence speaks, most emphatically speaks, in favor of the verse, now in dispute.” See Travis’s works, page 319 and 320.

“The result, then, of the whole, is,—that the verse in question, seems, beyond all degree of serious doubt, to have stood in this epistle, when it originally proceeded from the pen of St. John.

“In the Latin, or Western church, the suffrages of Tertullian, and Cyprian, of Marcus Celedensis, and Phabadius, in its favor, aided by the early, the solemn, the public appeal to its authority, by the African Bishops under Hunic; the preface, Bible, and conscripta-fides, of Jerom; the frequent, and direct citations of the verse by Eucherius, Augustine, Fulgentius, Vigilius, and Cassiodorius:—these, supported, as to the Greek, or Eastern churches, by the dialogue between Arius and Athanasius, as well as by the synopsis of this epistle—by the Armenian version, which was framed from Greek manuscripts, by the very early, and constant use of the Apostolos in the same Greek church, and by its public confession of faith: All these evidences, arising within the limit of the sixth century, to pass over the immense accumulation of testimony which has been produced subsequent to that era, offering themselves to the test of the judgment, combined in one point of view, unchecked by a single negation, unrebuked by any positive contradiction, unresisted by the smallest direct impeachment of the authenticity of the verse, throughout *all* the annals of *all* antiquity: All these circumstances seize the mind, as it were, by violence, and compel it to acknowledge the verity, the original existence of the verse in question.” Travis’s works, page 344—346.

To the evidence which has been advanced by Mr. Travis, I will add a brief statement of *facts*, from the writings of Dr. Gill. He says, “Concerning this text, there has been a dispute whether it is genuine or not. It is objected, that *some* of the ancient fathers did not quote it.

But what then? others did; and a sufficient number of them to prove it genuine. It is quoted by Fulgentius against the Arians in the beginning of the sixth century, without the least scruple or hesitation. It is found in Jerom's translation, which was made near the close of the fourth century. It is quoted by Athanasius, about the fourth, and by Cyprian about the middle of the third century. It is manifestly referred to, by Tertullian, in the beginning of the third, and by Clemens of Alexandria, toward the close of the second century. Thus it is to be traced up within one hundred years, or less, of the time when the epistle was written. This ought surely, to satisfy any one, that the passage is genuine. There never was any dispute about it, until Erasmus left it out, in the first edition of his translation of the New Testament; and yet he himself, upon the credit of an old British copy, put it into another edition of his translation." The Dr. adds, "Yea, the Socinians themselves, did not dare to leave it out, in their German Racovian version, which was made in 1630." See Dr. Gill's body of divinity, vol. 1, page 198.

It will be readily perceived, that Dr. Gill, has only given us a condensed view of the evidence, adduced by Mr. Travis; with the additional testimony of Clemens; and the Socinians, feeling the necessity of retaining the text in debate, in their own version. But, as Clemens lived in the close of the second century, his quoting the words, is a solid proof that they *are* genuine.

The Rev. Caleb Alexander says, in the appendix of his "essay on the Deity of Christ," "We are very happy that it is in our power to produce very direct and peremptory testimonies, to establish the originality and authenticity of this disputed text. For these testimonies we are indebted to the judicious and learned works of the Rev.

George Travis, A. M. Prebendary of Chester, and Vicar of Eastham, who, in his letters to Edward Gibbon, Esq. has rescued this text from the hands of its adversaries, and conferred on the church an obligation of the liveliest gratitude and love." Alexander's Essay on the Deity of Christ, page 62.

Thus, I have now, my hearers, laid before you the evidence I intended, relative to the divinity of 1 John, 5. 7. The inferences, naturally arising from the subject, must necessarily be omitted, until the next occasion. They will be sufficiently interesting and copious, to form an entire discourse. I shall, therefore, close this sermon, with that apostolical injunction, "Contend earnestly for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints."

G

SERMON IV.



I JOHN, V, 7.

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.



IN the three preceding Sermons, the general propositions which were deduced from this passage, have been discussed. In illustrating them, we have seen the doctrine which the text contains—its agreement with the Scriptures at large—and the evidence of its divine authority. It only remains, to close the subject with an appropriate improvement. And,

1. In the light of what has been said, I think, we are fully warranted to receive 1 John, 5. 7, as the *real* word of God. The evidence alleged against it, that it is not found “in many of the ancient versions and manuscripts,” has, in some measure, been accounted for; and, as we have seen *positive proof* of its existence in every age, up to the very period, in which, St. John lived, we may rest fully satisfied. It has been shown, that “the Italic version, which was made in the *first* century, contained this text, and was for many centuries, used by *all* the Latin churches in Europe, Asia and Africa. The text in question, must have had a being when it was put into the ver-

sion under consideration. If it had been forged, the iniquity must then have been at once detected by the original manuscript ; and, even, by the voice of its author, who was probably, still alive.

It is inadmissible to suppose, that the Latin churches would have received a text as inspired, which was not to be found in the apostle's autograph, nor in the manuscripts used in the Greek churches. Its being referred to by Cyprian and Clemens, in the *third* and *second* centuries, very fully shows, that it *was* received by the Christian world then, as the pure word of God. The want of this text, in a thousand manuscripts and versions, which have been made subsequent to the third and fourth centuries, cannot destroy this positive testimony in its favor. As it contains a doctrine, clearly revealed in the Holy Scriptures ; it is also a strong proof of its authenticity, to an orthodox mind. No evidence, however, arises from that consideration, in the view of those, who do not allow that the Trinity, and the Divinity of Christ, are truths revealed in the Bible. It is no wonder, that with such sentiments, *they* should doubt the inspiration of 1 John 5. 7, nor, that they should exert themselves to prove it spurious.

If a text were to be found in the Scriptures, opposite to their express doctrines, we would undoubtedly, on that very account, question its authority. Men, therefore, who think, that this is the only passage, which speaks of a Trinity in Unity ; will naturally consider its very contents, as being evidence of its spuriousness. Nothing short of positive testimony can convince them of its divine original. That, however, has, I think, been fully exhibited. I shall, therefore, consider myself justified in quoting the text, as evidence of a Triune God ; unless greater proof of its fallacy can be made to appear, than I have ever yet seen. In itself, it bears the characteristics of inspiration, strongly

supported by external positive testimony. These things are sufficient to satisfy us, who are fully convinced, that *three* divine Persons exist in one undivided essence. This is our faith; and it is built on solid evidence, independent of the text in dispute. We do not contend for it, as a passage, on which the belief of a Trinity solely depends; but as a part of divine revelation, of which we ought ever to be tenacious. To say with some writers, that “we *can* do without it,” is no proper reason for consigning it to that grave, in which its enemies conceive it to be now laid. No part of the Sacred Oracles, may be consistently deemed unnecessary. “Every word of God is pure;” and, it should neither be added to, nor diminished. Infinite wisdom best knows, what is necessary to the perfection of Scripture, and what is not. If one half of the Bible were annihilated, in the other, every gospel truth would have ample support; nevertheless, the loss would be incalculable. There is no reason, therefore, in being any less engaged to defend 1 John 5. 7, than if the doctrine of the Trinity depended on its single authority. The Christian church, is under indispensable obligation to contend for every verse and word, in the book of God. As the text in view contains a doctrine of vital importance in the divine system, we ought never to relinquish it, without plenary evidence of its spuriousness.

2. From what has been said on this subject, we must be convinced, the text in debate is an irresistible proof of *three* Persons in *one* God.

There is no other text in the Sacred volume, in which, the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, is so expressly declared. In this single passage, the sense of *many* others, is condensed, and expressed with peculiar happiness and energy. We need not be surprised, therefore, that Anti-Trinitarians have been so industrious to sink its authority.

It cannot be mistaken, in respect to the Persons in God ; for, they are distinctly mentioned, by the appropriate names of "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost." In relation to the Unity of the essence, the text is sufficiently clear ; although *this* has been disputed by some learned and orthodox divines.

Among the dissenters from this construction of the terminating clause of the text, "*these three are one*," we find Beza, Calvin, Dr. McKnight, and Dr. Wall. I do not know of any other distinguished Trinitarians, of their opinion in this respect. But with due deference to the judgment of these brilliant lights in the church, we are warranted to dissent from their conclusions, in the case before us. Taking into view the orthodox churches and clergy at large, more than a thousand to one have been and *now are*, of the opinion, that the clause in view, is expressive of the Unity of the divine essence.

No doubt it means likewise, that the three divine Persons, are united in their testimony concerning Christ and his salvation ; but that does not exclude the other important signification. The general suffrage of common sense, is in favor of the highest construction which is put upon that union. It appears very clearly, that the Anti-Trinitarians, as well as the Orthodox, take the words in their highest import.

If 1 John 5. 7, expresses nothing but a union of testimony, it would afford no evidence against the Anti-Trinitarian system ; it would, therefore, be useless for them to exert themselves with such persevering energy to silence its voice. If any man have an important cause in a court of justice, and a witness is like to appear against him, whose testimony would prove fatal to his case ; his *interest* would naturally lead him to destroy the character of that witness, in regard to veracity ; but if the testimo-

ny of that witness could in no sense injure his cause, he would be loath to take the trouble to shake his character in point of truth, let his veracity be ever so vulnerable. The zeal and perseverance of Anti-Trinitarians, to overthrow the authenticity of the text, is a decided evidence of their conviction, that its literal and obvious import is *against* them. If they mean to contend for an exposition of it, which does not clash with *their* scheme, it is vain to argue against its divine authority; for that must induce the world to believe, that they themselves really think otherwise. The opinion of men in general, in all ages, orthodox and heterodox, has been in favor of that construction of the text, which is given in my first sermon. No sentence could be framed in so few words, more clear in its import, in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity.

3. From what has been said we learn, that some orthodox divines, have been unnecessarily shaken in respect to the inspiration of the text in dispute; and made unguarded concessions to its enemies. Their doubts and acknowledgments, have induced me once to suppose, that they must have possessed greater evidence of its spuriousness, than I have been able to find on a careful examination. I have never, however, met with any Trinitarians, who have avowed a fixed belief, that the text is an interpolation. Some appear to be inclined not to contend for it, for the three following reasons; namely, the *negative evidence* which lies against it—the *dispute* about its divine authority—and its not being *absolutely necessary* to support the Trinitarian system.

Although these things are true, yet, there is such internal and external evidence of the divinity of the text, that no Trinitarian can be justified in declining to appear in its defence. Some, however, who take this course, are sour

in the faith, pious and learned ; but "great men are not always wise." Many who are as eminent in every respect as the divines in view, are exactly of my opinion, in relation to the authenticity of the text in debate.

Among these are, the Rev. William Jones, the Rev. George Travis, and Dr. Gill ; with many other shining lights in the Christian church. Dr. Emmons, and the Rev. John Brown, author of the Family Bible, have viewed the evidence against the passage to be so trivial, that they have made no mention of the controversy, in writing on it. For a Trinitarian to express a single doubt, or to make the most distant approach to a concession that it is spurious, gives a greater blow to its authenticity, in the view of mankind, than all the arguments that can be set in array against it, by its avowed enemies. This should prevent every incautious observation from men, who firmly believe the doctrine of a Triune God. Believing that the text contains no false principle, it may be properly vindicated, as far as there is any testimony in its favor ; and no concessions need be made of its spuriousness, unless there is *positive* evidence of the fact. As no Trinitarian appears to be prepared to say this, no steps should be taken, to expose any part of the professed word of God to the rage of its adversaries. Every saying of Trinitarians, which could be, with any colour of plausibility, construed into an acknowledgment of the spuriousness of this text, has been eagerly seized by Anti-Trinitarians, as a ground, on which to raise *their* fabric of opposition to the doctrine of the Trinity.

It appears to me that the Rev. Drs. Scott, Doddridge, and Wardlaw, have not been sufficiently guarded, in relation to the sacred authority of this text ; as their thoughts evidently preponderated in favor of its authenticity.

It has been asserted by a writer of the Anti-Trinitarian school, and with an air of triumph, that "no gentleman,

possessing a competent share of Biblical and critical knowledge, would *now* venture to call the text in question, a genuine passage of scripture." I have a strong impression, that such sayings as these, have a very imposing effect on many of the advocates of divine truth. Some very able writers and divines, seem to have a dread of having their judgment and critical talents, called in question ; and this, they see will be done, if they attempt to use or vindicate 1 John, 5. 7, as a text of Scripture. In my opinion, therefore, this important passage suffers greatly, both from the neglect of its friends, and the opposition of its enemies. It would be well if more caution were used by the Orthodox about it ; and more exertion made on their part, to support its credit ; seeing it bears such visible *internal* marks of being inspired.

If the text be in fact, a genuine passage, I must dissent from the opinion that it is unimportant, on the ground, that the doctrine of the Trinity *can* be supported independent of its aid. This seems like a reflection on Divine wisdom, in giving us superfluous evidence of an important truth ; and betrays a want of fidelity, in defending the Holy Oracles, which God has committed to the care and use of his Church.

But though this text, evidently, contains an important gospel doctrine, it ought to be rejected, if there were *plenary* and *positive* testimony against its authenticity. In a book, divinely inspired, there can be no deficiency, nor any thing redundant. Though the doctrine of the Trinity may be maintained without the text, yet, proving it to be an interpolation, may settle some wavering minds forever, on the side of Anti-Trinitarianism. I fear, that this thought may not have been sufficiently weighed by some Trinitarian divines. Such an entering wedge, into the system of truth, may have a fatal influence, on the salvation of many

souls. No doubt the Anti-Trinitarians are fully aware of this ; and are thereby excited to make every possible effort to subvert the text in view.

It is extremely unwise, therefore, to retreat before them from an inch of ground, that can be maintained by an ingenuous contest. Unless more evidence can be produced than I have yet seen, I must remain in the belief, that there is no need of surrendering 1 John 5. 7, into the hands of its enemies. It is too precious to be sacrificed in this manner.

4. From what has been said on this subject, we may be convinced that the *Trinity in Unity* is a doctrine that rests on evidence as solid as the throne of God,

The text that has been vindicated in these discourses, and many others, are incontestible proofs of its truth. There are, however, some general facts, clearly revealed in the Holy Scriptures, which more strongly prove the doctrine, than this text, or any other single passage. Many texts might, indeed, be selected, confirming the Trinity in the view of candid minds ; but artful reasoners will invent ways of evading their force. 1 John 5. 7 is the most conclusive proof of a Triune God of any one text in the Bible ; but it is construed by many in such a way as to impose silence on it, in respect to that doctrine.

But, there are certain leading facts revealed in the Scriptures, whose force cannot be evaded, namely, that there are *three agents*, called "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost;" whose names, perfections, works and worship, prove the proper Deity of each, in connexion with the repeated declarations of the Bible, that there is only *one God*. On strict Unitarian principles, these facts form a paradox ; but on Trinitarian grounds, they are of easy explication.

In relation to this subject, Anti-Trinitarians have no other alternative, but to argue, that the names, perfections,

works and worship, ascribed to Christ and the Holy Spirit, are not proper evidences of their supreme divinity. But, this course is extremely arduous and difficult; and their united labors evince, that they feel the pressure of these obstacles to their system. To explain away all the testimony which the Scriptures present, in relation to the Supreme Deity of Christ and his atonement, the personality and divinity of the Holy Ghost, requires talents and exertion. It is surprising that they *can* satisfy their own minds on the subject, or convince their hearers of the practicability of supporting such a baseless scheme on the ground of Scripture testimony. But, after all their elaborate and subtile reasoning, *we* must believe an inspired apostle, when he says of Christ, "This is the true God, and eternal life." 1 John 5. 20.

It will not be expected that I can enter, at present, into a discussion of the great facts, which have been briefly mentioned. Let it be remembered, however, that in various sermons, these things have been amply supported from this desk. In three discourses from Rev. 1. 8, it was clearly shown, that *Christ is eternal, almighty, omniscient, omnipresent, the creator of all things, forgives sin, rules the universe, receives supreme worship, will ultimately raise the dead, and judge accountable agents with a judgment from which there is no appeal.* No higher evidence of his supreme Deity can be consistently required. To men in whose minds this point is established, no doubt can suggest itself concerning the personality and Deity of the Holy Ghost. As there can be no more than *one God*, these great facts prove, the Unity of *three persons, agents or subsistencies*, in one undivided essence. The doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, therefore, is capable of being maintained, if 1 John 5. 7 should fall. But I think, we have great reason to believe that if St. John were now on

earth, he would freely declare that it was, either written with his own hand, or by his amanuensis. It has been fully shown, in what has been said, that the text rests on ample testimony.

You, however, my hearers, must weigh the evidence that has been adduced in its favor for yourselves. But, remember, that you are accountable to God for the judgment you form on this important question.

The Trinity of persons in one God, is a truth, on which, the whole plan of redemption is founded. If it is not true, then Christ is no more than a creature—no atonement has been made for sin—the Spirit is only a name of the Father—or one of his attributes, or modes of his operation. The infinite evil of sin—the total depravity of the human heart—the necessity of regeneration by the Spirit—the eternal punishment of finally impenitent sinners, are points which must fall to the ground with that doctrine. We are warranted, therefore, in believing that Anti-Trinitarian principles subvert the plan of salvation from the foundation to the top stone. If I know my own heart, I have no unkind feelings towards those people who are believers in that doctrine; but christian fidelity requires me to vindicate the truth, and oppose dangerous errors.

The doctrine of the Trinity is not a matter of mere speculation. No; it is of a highly practical nature. Receiving or rejecting it, is an expression of moral character, and holds a connection with consequences of unlimited magnitude. The difference between Trinitarians and Anti-Trinitarians, as a certain writer states, “respects the object of worship—the ground of hope—and the rule of duty.” Surely, these are momentous considerations. If I am not greatly deceived, however, I as ardently desire the salvation of my Anti-Trinitarian fellow creatures, as any other class of mankind. God grant, that any cause

of hardness, which they may give to me, on account of my opposition to their peculiar sentiments, may never alter my feelings towards them in that respect.

It is our indispensable duty, christian brethren, ever to remember that divine saying, "Charity suffereth long, and is kind." It is perfectly consistent with steadfastness in the faith, and a persevering defence of all its doctrines. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." Love to his glorious name will lead us to believe and defend his doctrines, to obey his commands, and to love our worst enemies. The Trinity in Unity, is laid down as an article of primary importance, in almost all the creeds in Christendom. In the defence of it, many fell a sacrifice in the fifth century, when the dark cloud of Arianism, overspread the christian horizon. That doctrine has been correctly understood, firmly believed, ably defended, and adhered to by an overwhelming majority in the church in all ages; with the exception of the greater part of the fourth and fifth centuries. Truth, however, is not always on the side of the multitude; yet, it is no small degree of evidence in favor of the Trinity, that the Bible is so calculated, as to make a deep impression of it on almost every mind.

"Dr. Buchanan, in his tour through Hindostan, in the year 1806, found in the interior of that country, a body of Christians who have been settled there from the early ages of Christianity." They gave him this account of themselves;—"We are of the true faith, whatever you may be from the West, for we came from the place where the followers of Christ were first called Christians." The Dr. states, "At that time they had 55 churches, and their number was estimated at 23,000 souls." They informed him, that Christianity was first planted there by the apos-

the Thomas. He says, in their system of faith, the article of the Trinity is thus expressed,"—

"We believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three persons in one God ; neither confounding the persons nor dividing the substance ; one in three, and three in one. None before or after the other : In majesty, honor, might and power, co-equal ; Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity." See Dr. Buchanan's *Christian Researches in Asia* ; the sixth American edition, page 175.

In this article of their belief, there is a remarkable coincidence with the faith of christians in general, of whom, it appears, they had no knowledge. This is a strong evidence, that the *Trinity in Unity* is the doctrine of Scripture, and that they derived their faith in it from that fountain.

5. In the view of this subject, we learn the importance of examining closely the ground of our faith and hope. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." We have no right to think, that any doctrine of the Bible is obscurely revealed. It is incumbent on us, therefore, to study the Scriptures with great care ; and in understanding them, admit their true meaning, without being influenced by any man or denomination of men. In this respect, we are taught by Jesus Christ to "call no man father upon earth ; for one is our Father, who is in heaven." Math 23. 3. The only rule of judging of doctrines, is the word of God ; and it is "able to make us wise unto salvation." 2 Tim. 3. 15. In relation to this, our souls are at stake. It will appear at the day of judgment, that doctrinal errors were connected with the depravity of the heart—are of a moral nature, and render us accountable.

If we abandon our belief in the Trinity, we can have no hope on the ground of Christ's atonement ; and, there-

fore, we must lean on a righteousness of our own for eternal justification. This is a broken reed—a basis of sand—a hope, of which we must eventually be ashamed. It is solemnly asserted by inspiration, “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.”

May God, therefore, through the riches of his grace in Jesus Christ, preserve us from all errors, and guide us into the truths of his Holy Word. AMEN.



[At the conclusion of the foregoing sermons, the Rev. *John Sherman* delivered a discourse in answer to them, from the same pulpit; after which the following five sermons were preached, in reply to his.]

SERMON V.

I JOHN, V, 7.

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost : and these three are one.

IN the sermons which have been delivered from these words already, the subject was regularly closed. An event, however, has transpired, which renders it necessary for me to proceed with it beyond the original design.

After the preceding discourses were preached, you know, my hearers, that an answer was given to them by a gentleman of respectable talents. It is, therefore, incumbent on me, either to give up the ground I have taken as untenable, or reply to his arguments. If I could view them as unanswerable, I hope, that my mind possesses the candor which would lead me to an open acknowledgment. It is *truth* and not *victory*, which should be our grand object in all our inquiries.

The reasons of my dissent from the conclusions of that learned opponent, will give you an opportunity of judging with more propriety the point in debate.

I shall endeavor to meet his arguments in the order in which they occur ; and, assign the reasons why, they have not produced conviction in my mind.

As the preamble of the gentleman's discourse is highly flattering to me in various respects, I shall pass over the

principal part of it in silence. In remarking on his objections to 1 John 5. 7, it will be my aim to confirm his good opinion of my candor.

As he professes to have an entire conviction of the spuriousness of that passage, I have no disposition to doubt his sincerity in the matter. My only concern will be with his arguments; as I differ with him in opinion, on the authenticity of the text in view.

There are two things in the introduction of his discourse, which require some attention. The *first*, is the opinion of Michaelis, who is called by the gentleman in opposition, "a Trinitarian of pre-eminent talents, and deeply versed in oriental learning." The words of that author, are said to be these; that 1 John 5. 7, "holds its place in our printed Bibles, although well known by all the learned to be a vile interpolation, and in the face of the clearest and most indubitable evidence of its spuriousness, to the shame and disgrace of the Christian world." To this, I reply:—If professor Michaelis be a Trinitarian, he has, certainly, expressed himself in relation to his brethren, in a bold and offensive manner. If the whole learned Trinitarian world, *will* retain a text, which they all *know* "to be a vile interpolation," it was surely high time for professor Michaelis, to have separated himself from such a corrupt connection. But, until sufficient evidence is presented of the spuriousness of the text in question, we are under no obligation to coincide with Michaelis in opinion.

We are directed by Christ in this respect, to "call no man our father upon the earth." Our Anti-Trinitarian friends, are constantly warning us in the most solemn strains, to take heed how we subscribe to the creeds, confessions, catechisms, and assertions of men, who are not inspired of God. I can cheerfully join with my opponent in his saying, "It is with truth only, that we are

concerned; and, in it, we are all alike interested. The wood, hay, and stubble of error may prove more than a mere incumbrance—it may scorch us with its flames.”

The *second* thing to be noticed in the introduction of my opponent's discourse is, that the “learned European divines, in general, now *acknowledge* the spuriousness of the text in question.” If in this assertion, the Orthodox be included, they have certainly altered greatly since the time in which Michaelis charged them with dishonesty. But, allowing this to be true, we are not bound to be of their opinion until we are convinced by ample proof. But I must proceed from the introduction, to the body of the discourse on which I am animadverting.

The gentleman commences, by informing us how many words of the place in question are disputed. His statement in this respect is, no doubt, correct. But, if it were otherwise, it would not affect the case; as there are so many disputed, as completely to destroy the sense in which the Trinitarians understand the passage.

His first attack is made on the *internal* evidence of 1 John, 5. 7. In opposition to the plea of the Orthodox, that it is necessary to support a proper connection in the chapter, he contends, that it “bears, in this connection, the marks of forgery upon its very countenance.”

This is a heavy charge; and, if it could be maintained it would be sufficient to destroy the whole authority of this text. But the *forgery* is boldly attacked as well as the *forgery*. The gentleman says, “the decree of heaven is forever against him.” It seems, however, that he has gone down to the grave undetected, for his name cannot be told; nor the place of his birth and residence; nor the age in which he lived; or whether he was a clergyman, or one of the laity. If such facts could be ascertained, they would settle the dispute.

There are three great *marks* of forgery, mentioned by my opponent, which he expresses in the energetic language of "*one absurdity—one contradiction—and one abomination.*"

In explaining, he observes, 1. "The *absurdity* is, that the six witnesses are reducible to *five*. *Three and three make five only.*" But why, I ask, have not all the Trinitarians on earth seen this pretended absurdity? Have they all been so blind, that they could not see it? or, so wicked as to overlook it? But, there is no difficulty in this case. It is not the intention of the writer of the text in debate to inform us that there are six *distinct* witnesses. It is surprising that this should be viewed as an argument calculated to convince a Trinitarian. We believe, that the Holy Ghost is God, and that he can and does bear witness, both in heaven and on earth. As he fills immensity, the objection can have no weight in our minds. In relation to this point the Psalmist saith unto God, "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there."

It has been clearly proved, in my sermons on this subject, that "the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost," do bear witness *in*, and *from* heaven, in respect to the scheme of salvation through Christ; and, that the Spirit also bears witness on earth, by his operations on men, cannot be doubted. The writer of the text has stated glorious *facts*; and, therefore, he is justly entitled to exoneration from the dreadful charge of "*absurdity and contradiction.*" These two great marks of forgery are, I think, fully obviated. To make such objections is mere cavelling.

The third grand mark of forgery is, that the text contains "*one abomination.*" This is a serious charge! But

on what is it founded? The gentleman goes on to tell ; namely, that by the words, “ the Spirit of God is degraded to the rank of an earthly witness, in contradistinction from heavenly witnesses, and placed on a level with water and blood.” He adds, “ the force of the contrast, introduced by the words “in heaven and on earth,” necessarily impels to the conclusion, that there are two sorts of witnesses; the one *celestial*, and the other *terrestrial*. The *abomination* is therefore obvious. The Spirit of God is degraded to an *earthly character*, and made to be of *earthly origin*.” This passage, he says, “ bears *the mark of the beast* on its very forehead—changing the glory of the incorruptible Spirit to that of a witness belonging to this world.”

Surely this is high sounding language ! But what is there in all this, so degrading to the divine Spirit? My opponent says, that he is made to be an “ *earthly witness*.” The writer of the text, however, conveys no such idea. There is an obvious difference between bearing witness on earth, and being of an earthly origin and character. This sense is forced upon the text by the objector; for, it is not its natural and obvious import. The writer, does not say that there are three *earthly* witnesses; but, that there are three that bear witness *in* or *on* earth. “ The water and blood,” are divine ordinances; and, therefore, it is no dishonor to the Spirit to accompany his own institutions with the evidence of his special and saving operations. This is infinitely far from being “ on a level” with these things. The statement of the writer, instead of being “ an absurdity, a contradiction, and an abomination,” is a lucid exhibition of the only way of eternal life.

The judgment of Dr. Doddridge, is widely different from the opinion of my opponent in relation to this text; and, he is considered by Anti-Trinitarians themselves pre-

eminent in candor, piety and learning. He says, "I am persuaded the words contain an important truth." See his "Family Expositor," vol. 6. page 311. It is really surprising, that so great and good a man as Dr. Doddridge, should speak so favorably of the meaning of the text, if the gentleman in opposition to me can with propriety appeal so solemnly "to every man's conscience and common sense," concerning its "absurdity, contradiction, and abomination." Can it be supposed, that Dr. Doddridge was destitute of conscience, and void of common sense? If this is true, it is time for our opponents to take back many things which they have said in honor of his memory. But, in the view of what has been said, I think, the three prominent marks of forgery, which have been mentioned by my opponent, disappear. The ground of my opinion in this respect, must, however, abide your judgment; for which you are not responsible to me but to God.

But the gentleman in opposition, proceeds to another internal mark of the spuriousness of the text in question, which is, its ungrammatical construction. He says, "the Greek word $\epsilon\nu$ translated one, "is neuter gender, and cannot be applied to the word $\vartheta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ or God, which is always of the masculine gender." But allowing this to be correct, the conclusion which he draws from it, that it proves the passage to be a forgery, may, I think, be consistently denied. It may be thought to affect the received meaning of the text; but it can have no bearing against its authenticity; for, he himself acknowledges that, in respect to harmony of design and action, it is grammatically accurate. He gives us an instance of this, from 1 Cor. 3. 8. "He that planteth and he that watereth *are one*." To argue the forgery of the text from this consideration is, therefore, inadmissible.

The weight of the gentleman's argument appears to be

this: The neuter gender cannot be applied to persons, for that would be such a confounding of genders, as to form a barbarism in language. The pronoun *it* is in the neuter gender, and yet it is frequently applied to persons, by writers of classical eminence; as, for instance, "it was I, it was he, or it was they." Both the neuter and the masculine genders are applied to the Spirit, where the word evidently signifies God. See Rom. 8. 16. "The Spirit *itself* beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." John 16. 13. "When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth." Able scholars in the Greek language say, that the neuter gender, as applied to God in our text, instead of being a barbarism, gives greater force and dignity to the sentence, than to have used the masculine gender.

The gentleman's grammatical criticisms appear to have no effect in overthrowing the exposition of the text which was given in my first sermon; nor in proving it to be a forgery. Some reasons have been offered, and more will be added.

1. The grammatical situation of the text, has not prevented the learned world, in general, from understanding it in the very sense in which it has been explained in the preceding sermons. 2. The Holy Spirit, who inspired the sacred writers, is not bound to conform his words to human views of grammatical rules. 3. The apostle, in John 10. 30, uses the very same phraseology, in which the text in dispute is written, concerning the unity of persons in the Godhead; namely, "I and my Father *are one*."

But my opponent and his brethren in opinion say, that in the text referred to, "Christ speaks of the unity of agreement, or harmony in the same cause, between the Father and himself." This construction, however is far from being the real meaning of the sacred writer, as we

may easily see by the connection. In that place our Lord is not speaking of unity of *cause*, or harmony of testimony, as his main object; but of *similarity of nature, equality in perfections, and unity in power*. This will appear, on a careful examination of what is said, in connection with the words under consideration. The subject commences with the 23d verse.

“And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon’s porch. Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father’s name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me, and *I give* unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of *my hand*. My Father which gave them to me, is greater than all: and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”

In the paragraph that has been cited, our Lord speaks of power, in distinction from other things—a power to give eternal life; to preserve his people from every enemy, internal and external; and to preserve them forever. He asserts with a divine solemnity, “and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” No mere creature can, “give eternal life;” for it “is the gift of God.” Rom. 6. 23. A sacred writer says concerning the preservation of the saints, “Ye are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation.” 1 Pet. 1. 5. But if Jesus Christ gives eternal life unto his people, and preserves them from final ruin—and no one can do these things but God; it is an irresistible inference, that He is God. This shows his meaning clearly in the words, “I and my Father *are one*.” In this, the Jews, certainly un-


derstood him as claiming real divinity ; for as soon as the words had dropped from his lips, they “ took up stones to stone him.” This led him to say, “ Many good works have I showed you from my Father : for which of these works do you stone me.” The Jews answered for a good work we stone thee not ; but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man makest thyself God.” Hence we see, that they understood his words in the very sense, in which we understand 1 John 5. 7. But instead of informing them that they had mistaken his meaning, he persisted in his claims to divine honor ; saying, “ I am the Son of God :—the Father is in me, and I in him.” John 10. 30, and 1 John 5. 7, are, therefore, perfectly similar, both in sense and phraseology. If the first be a genuine text, no evidence can arise from the words of the other as to grammatical order, that it is a forgery.

There is no intimation in the gospel, of St. John, that the Jews mistook Christ’s meaning in respect to equality with God, either through prejudice, or any other cause. In the words in view, he undoubtedly, means, that Jesus is *one* with the Father, in a sense in which, no created being can claim unity with God. This is, I think, a sufficient answer to the grammatical difficulty raised by my opponent against the text in dispute.

4. If the supposed barbarism is such a powerful evidence that the text in question is an insertion, it is very strange that other Anti-Trinitarian writers have not availed themselves of the argument. It is the first time that I have ever seen it advanced in opposition to the text before us. The gentleman, whose objection I am answering is, I grant, a man of handsome talents, natural and acquired ; but thousands of consummate scholars on both sides of the question, must have seen the difficulty, if it is one ; and, of course, attacks and defences on that ground, must have

been numerous. Every hearer must see the force of this reply. I am not prepared to say, however, that my opponent has originated the objection ; but no candid mind can allow it to have any weight. It is not my design to defend this, or any other part of our translation, only on the ground of fair reasoning.

In my sermons on the text, I have explicitly acknowledged that its authenticity has been doubted, by some gentlemen of candor and intelligence, and have stated their reasons ; but I must weigh those reasons for myself and not abandon the passage, until I am convinced of its spuriousness. It was to give you, my hearers, an opportunity of judging the merits of this debate, that my discourses on the text were delivered. We must give an account unto God for our conclusions on the subject ; and therefore, we must not be improperly swayed, either by the influence or assertions of men, who have no claim to infallibility.

But I must not overlook any of the grounds which my opponent has taken. He proceeds, as if the case was clearly proved, saying, that some wicked Trinitarian has forged the text ; using these words, “ this Trinitarian forger.” He tells us also of his *motive* in this action ; “ namely, to have in scripture *one* solitary passage at least, which might declare in plain language, the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, or that the three are numerically distinct, yet one God only.” He adds ;—“ In every age the Trinitarians have been called on to produce at least one plain passage of Scripture, which like the orthodox creeds, asserts the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, or of three persons in one God ; and they have appeared to great disadvantage in the eyes of their adversaries, that they have never been able to do it. Unquestionably, therefore, it must have been the design of the forger to wipe off this aspersion, and to introduce a
 proof text.”

That the Trinitarians "have appeared to great disadvantage in the eyes of their adversaries," may be true; but, that they have ever felt themselves to be greatly pressed on this ground, I am not prepared to admit. My own mind has never been embarrassed on that account; neither have I known of any other Trinitarians, suggesting the thing as a difficulty. It does not appear to have been the design of God, to have a system of doctrines comprised in any single text, or to have them arranged in any part of the Scriptures, in the order of a creed. This demand of our opponents, we must consider as being captious and unreasonable. It may easily be retorted upon themselves, by requiring them, "to produce at least one plain passage of Scripture, asserting" their opinion that Christ is a mere man, and the *natural* son of Joseph and Mary. This is their creed, as really as the doctrine of the Trinity is our's:—but, if the truth of it could be made to appear from a combined view of the Scriptures, we would never think of calling upon them to produce a complete statement of it in a single passage to command our belief. If any farther reply be thought necessary, the enquirer is referred to the 4th inference of the fourth sermon; which is, in my opinion, a complete answer to this formidable objection of my opponent.

But I must now proceed in answering his subsequent objections to the authority of the text in debate.

He refers us to the memorable prayer of Christ, recorded in the 17th chap. of John, to convince us that the Greek word *ἑν*, *one*, signifies unity of harmony in the same cause, instead of identity of essence.

That this is the meaning of the expression, in the place to which we are referred, there is no doubt. The nature of the subject warrants this construction. We fully believe that Christ is *one* with the Father "in the same

cause;" and in that sense, men, through divine grace, may be *one* with them ; but, that is no proof that the Greek word $\epsilon\nu$ is capable of no other signification. Particular modes of expression, are applied to different things in every language ; but the sense of them must be determined by the nature of the subjects to which they relate. If the Greek word $\epsilon\nu$, be capable of no other import but "unity of harmony in the same cause," all the learned world must have always known it ; and, therefore, the text in question would never have been cited by any classical writers, as a proof of the *Unity* of the divine essence. With this answer, I shall consider my opponent's objection sufficiently removed.

But the gentleman in opposition, after charging the *supposed* forger, with a barbarism in language, states ;—"The term, $\epsilon\nu$, is the most unfortunate, that he could have selected for his purpose. The declaration—These three are one, meaning *one* God, is something worse than wandering from his subject ; it is a deadly assault upon the argument. What means this parade of a multitude of witnesses, but to establish more firmly the fact to which they testify ? grounded on several independent witnesses, who must of course be distinct and separate beings, or consciousnesses, in order to corroborate and confirm the testimony of each other. Therefore, to say these three witnesses are *one God, one being only*, is striking away the corner stone of the argument, and demolishing at a stroke the foundation of the superstructure erected. Let me illustrate this case. Suppose I tell you that a certain fact was sworn to by a colonel, by a judge, and by a lawyer, three persons of distinguished veracity. You say, at once, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. I proceed then (to answer a purpose best known to myself) to state, that these three are *one man, one being, one*

individual consciousness, who was colonel, judge, and lawyer at the same time, and whom I therefore, denominate three persons. Aye, say you ;—that alters the case materially. Let us have more than one individual being, if you make out three witnesses. If your colonel, judge and lawyer be but one individual man you must have *two more* men, to make out three witnesses.

“ Thus, on every hand, the forger is detected, and the impious hot-headed zealot is slain with his own weapons. This interpolation throws every thing about it into absurdity and confusion. Erase this from the Epistle, and the argument of St. John stands fair and consistent. In *the Spirit*, we have the witness of God by miraculous powers, testifying that he hath given us eternal life, through Jesus Christ his Son ; and in the ceremony of water baptism, in which men profess faith in his divine mission, and in the *ceremony of the Lord’s supper*, in which they commemorate his death in the ratification of the new covenant, that brings life and immortality to light, we have the witness of *men*, to the same fact. Hence the apostle pertinently remarks, “ If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.”

To all this, I answer :—If we were Sabellians, and contending for the divine authority of the text in dispute, the gentleman’s argument, could not by us be consistently resisted. The case of his “ colonel, judge and lawyer, perfectly illustrates *their* views of a Trinity in God, but not *our*’s.” We do not consider the Almighty as being *one*, in the sense of a man sustaining three offices. In my sermons on this subject, it may be clearly seen, that there is an *important sense*, in which God is three distinct persons ; and, therefore, he is properly capable of bearing witness in a threefold manner. We do not hold, by any means, that the infinite Jehovah is only “ one individual consciousness.”

My opponent must first convince us, that his view of the manner of the divine existence is correct, before we can feel the force of this argument. If we were of his opinion about God, we would, no doubt, readily unite with him, in questioning the sacred authority of the text in debate.

But it is our fixed belief, that there is as *real* a personal distinction in the Godhead, as there is in three men ; yet, an entire unity of essence. Such a unity of nature or essence, no created persons can consistently claim. It has been fully proved, that the three Divine Persons, who are mentioned in the text, do bear a distinct witness ; and that they are only one essence or being. The gentleman, therefore, has brought up a doctrine which we fully believe, and placed it in a misrepresented light, to destroy the authority of a text that proves it. I should not have thought, that he would resort to such arguments, to convince Trinitarians, of the spuriousness of the text in question. But with these remarks, I shall dismiss the present objection. I cannot see how the “forger,” as he is called, “is detected” yet ; nor how such weapons could slay him. Neither can I see how the text in view, “throws every thing about it, into absurdity and confusion.”

You have seen, my hearers, that men of the first classical eminence have thought otherwise. In my judgment, therefore, “the argument of St. John, stands” *more* “fair, and consistent” with, than without this text. To your decision, however, the grounds of this conclusion are submitted.

But that saying of my opponent claims some attention ; namely, “In *the Spirit*, we have the witness of God by miraculous powers, testifying that he hath given us eternal life, through Jesus Christ his Son.” To me, his words seem to be involved in a great degree of ambiguity. I am at a

loss to know, whether he means by the word "*Spirit*," the Father himself, or, only his operation. The gentleman's scheme, certainly forbids us to believe that he means by the Spirit, a Divine Person, distinct from the Father. If by the Spirit, he means merely a divine operation, then there can be no distinction between the Spirit and "miraculous powers:" but, if by the Spirit be meant the Father, then Jesus Christ is the Spirit's son; and christians are baptized in the name of the Father, and in the name of the Son, and again in the name of the Father; that is, twice in the name of God, and once in the name of a *mere* creature. This is a great incumbrance to the Anti-Trinitarian system; and it makes them appear to as great a disadvantage in our view, as we can possibly appear in their's by not producing a text, which they will acknowledge to express the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity.

My opponent speaks of "water baptism," as a way "in which men profess faith in the *divine mission*" of Christ; but, surely, this is as unscriptural language as the expression Trinity in Unity. But the gentleman has probably adopted the phraseology, to escape saying, "in which men profess faith in his" *blood*. The latter, however, is certainly the most Scriptural manner of expressing the object of a christian's faith.

His observations on the Lord's supper, accord strictly with his views of baptism. The administration of these *ceremonies*, as he calls them, he considers as "the witness of men," in distinction from "miraculous powers," which he views as "the witness of *God*." But my learned antagonist, is certainly under a great mistake in this case; for there is no human testimony mentioned by St. John, as bearing witness to the facts which he has mentioned. The *Spirit* is certainly not a human witness; and neither are "the water and the blood." The whole account is the

witness of God, whether we include or exclude the text in debate. Those who wish to be farther satisfied on this point, are referred to Dr. Scott's exposition of the 9th verse, from which, undoubtedly, my opponent has formed this opinion.

But in the view of my opponent's Greek arguments, I will mention an observation made on Anti-Trinitarian writers, by Mr. Blackwall, in his sacred classics, Part 2. Chap. 5. He says;—"They outrage the sacred writers in a double capacity: *first*, they debase their sense as theologists and commentators, and then carp at, and vilify their language as grammarians and critics." That ingenious and pious divine, Dr. A. Fuller, says; "They are obliged, on almost every occasion, to have recourse to *interpolation*, or *mistranslation*; and are driven to disown the apostolic reasonings as a proper test of religious sentiment." He adds "When they have mangled and altered the translation to their own minds; informing us, that a term *may* be rendered *so*—and such a passage should be pointed *so*—and *so* on—they seem to expect that their opponents shall quote the Scriptures accordingly; and, if they do not, are very liberal in insinuating, that their design is to impose upon the vulgar. But, though it be admitted, that every translation must needs have its imperfections, and that these imperfections ought to be corrected by fair and impartial criticism; yet, where alterations are made by those who have an end to answer by them, they ought always to be suspected, and will be so by thinking and impartial people." See Fuller's Letters, page 252.

But, on the internal character of 1 John 5. 7, my opponent observes,—“that the manuscripts, versions, and quotations of this passage vary very much in their language—some of them omitting the word *Holy* before *Spirit*—some quotations having it “these three are *one God*,” which

is the reading of no manuscript or version whatever—and some manuscripts and versions have it “these three agree in one.” Some omit the last clause of verse 8th and attach it to verse 7th, which is the case with Cardinal Zimminies’s complutension polyclot, on which so much dependence is placed by the advocates for the genuineness of the passage. Now this diversity, in so singular a passage, ingenders a strong presumption, that it has been tampered with, by more hands than one; and, that different forgers, have been at variance with respect to the best method of wording the interpolation. Had it been written by St. John, as we have it in our Bibles, it would have been in every man’s memory and mouth; and quotations, versions and manuscripts, would have been as much *one*, as the heavenly witnesses are said to be.”

To this, I reply;—If different manuscripts and versions, disagree in reading, in respect to this text, then, something of it is to be found in them. The gentleman in opposition, has more than insinuated, that almost all the ancient manuscripts and versions of Scripture, are without any thing of the text in dispute. He says, however, the word “Holy,” is omitted in “some of them” before “Spirit;” and, therefore, in such manuscripts and versions the text is entire, with the exception of one word. In others, he says, “we have it,” “these three agree in one:” and, therefore, in them, the text is entire, with the exception of the word *in*, and the addition of two letters, making *are* to be the word *agree*. He acknowledges likewise, that the greater part of the text is to be found in the complutension polyclot of Cardinal Zimminies. In that my opponent says, “the latter clause of verse 8th, is omitted, and attached to the 7th verse: and, therefore, the text in dispute reads, “there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three agree in one.”

This is an omission of the word *for*, and the addition of two letters, making the word *are*, to be *agree*.

In respect to some quotations of the ancient fathers, my opponent complains, that they have added to the verse in debate, the word *God*. "These three are *one God*." In quoting, many writers aim to give the *sense* of a text, without confining themselves to its words;—and, therefore, such quotations are a powerful evidence of the authenticity of the passage in question.

My opponent's conclusion, "that it has been tampered with by more hands than one," is, probably true: for, it has been as much the interest of Anti-Trinitarians to annihilate its existence, or obscure its sense; as it has been the interest of the Orthodox to preserve its being, or defend its proper import. Granting it to be a genuine passage, it must have been a very "speckled bird" during the reign of Arianism, which was, with very little variation, from the early part of the fourth century to the middle of the sixth.

The gentleman's last remark, that "had it been written by St. John,—quotations, versions and manuscripts would have been as much *one* as the heavenly witnesses are said to be," is very far from being conclusive. There are various readings of texts in the different versions of Scripture, which stand undisputed in respect to authenticity. We find quotations from the Old Testament in the New, differing as much in words, as the text in dispute. These quotations are from the Septuagint translation, which was made some hundred years before the birth of Christ. Gen. 5. 24, reads in our translation, "And Enoch walked with God:" but, as it is taken from the Septuagint, in Heb. 11. 5, it is rendered, "he pleased God." In *that* translation, it is said of Christ,—Heb. 1. 6, "Let all the angels of God worship him:" but our translation of the 97th Psalm.

9th verse, is, "Worship him all ye gods." The authenticity of these passages, is not called in question on account of such variations.

When we take into view the state of the christian world in the Arian age, and the nature of the text in dispute, we need not wonder at finding it involved in some degree of obscurity. The gentleman's arguments are far from destroying the internal evidence of 1 John 5. 7, as a genuine text of Scripture ; and his historical testimony against its authority, shall be carefully considered in the next discourse.

L

SERMON VI.

I JOHN, v, 7.

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

I have an opportunity, my hearers, of proceeding with my reply to the discourse which was delivered in this house in opposition to my sermons on this text. At our last meeting, an answer was given to the arguments of my opponent, on the internal evidence of its spuriousness.

It must be acknowledged, that much depends on the internal character of the passage in dispute. If it could be proved that it is in *itself* an absurdity, or, that it contains a doctrine at variance with the established principles of the Scriptures; no historical testimony against it would be necessary to silence its voice. On the contrary, if no solid argument appears against it in these respects, powerful historical evidence must be required, to condemn it as a spurious text in the view of impartial people. I must be allowed to think, that there is a conviction in your minds, that the purity of its internal character has been amply supported, in opposition to all the objections of my ingenious and ardent opponent.

Under this impression, I shall proceed to an examination of his historical testimony against the divine authority of the text in debate. The gentleman seems to proceed with admirable courage and alacrity in laying that before us. He goes on to say;—

“In proving the spuriousness of this passage, it falls to our lot to show, that it could not have been in the autograph of St. John—i. e. to prove a negative. Much is said, by the advocates of this passage, to degrade what is styled negative evidence. But it is the only evidence by which any notorious and universally admitted interpolation can be proved to be such; and is often as convincing, as satisfactory and certain, as any positive proof whatever. The absence of a person from the place where he must be, if alive, is absolute proof of his death; and to show and to prove a negative in the case, viz. that he is not in that place, is as substantial and irresistible evidence, as it would be to exhibit his lifeless body in the tomb.”

It appears to be the leading object of my opponent, in what has now been stated, to convince us, that *negative proof* is sufficient to silence the text in question. If this kind of evidence were opposed by no positive proof to the contrary, it is readily granted that it would be sufficient. If, when Erasmus, in the fifteenth century, called the authenticity of the text in question, no account could be found of it in any manuscript, or version of the Scriptures; nor any quotations of it in the writings of the ancient fathers of the Christian church; the evidence would be irresistible, that it must have been forged near that very time. But in the historical evidence which was advanced in my third sermon, we have seen that in every century, back to the very first in the Christian era, it has been considered as an inspired passage. But if it could be proved that there was no possibility of erasing it from the ancient manu-

scripts, versions and writings of the fathers ; nor, of omitting it by transcribers, neither through design nor inadvertence ; but, that forging and inserting it in such writings were practicable and easy, then we must conclude, that, as it does not appear in all these places, it must be an interpolation. So, my opponent reasons on the subject ; but it is a kind of logic, that I cannot admit as being sound.

He has expressly admitted that it *was* quoted seven hundred years by the Latin authors, and two hundred years by the Greek writers, before it was questioned by Erasmus as being a spurious text. He says, “the passage of the heavenly witnesses is not quoted by any Greek writer before the thirteenth century, nor by any Latin writer earlier than the eighth.” It is, however, very surprising, that a *notorious* and now universally admitted interpolation, should have been quoted in the christian world through a period of seven hundred years, without one faithful witness to oppose the iniquity !

In the eighth century, the art of printing was unknown ; and therefore, all the copies of the scriptures then existing were written with the pen. Surely, no writers would have quoted the text in debate, unless they found it in *some* of the sacred manuscripts. Without any doubt, there were many manuscripts of scripture existing then far more ancient than any that are now in being. As my opponent allows, that the text was then quoted by the Latin writers, it is a strong evidence of its authenticity.

But if it should be said, that the text must have been forged in the eighth century, and that there were no Anti-Trinitarians between that and the fifteenth, to announce the forgery to the world ; we may reply, that such people have, no doubt, existed in every age. We have an account of a famous Italian father, called Joachim, who was tried for Arian sentiments in the beginning of the thir-

teenth century; and 1 John 5. 7, was exhibited against him, in a general council, of 1200 ministers, "and an equal number of deputies." See page 45.

It may be asked, why did not that learned man inform his judges, that the text on which their main reliance was placed, was "a vile interpolation," and never taken from the autograph of St. John? This ground would, undoubtedly, have been taken by him, if he had thought himself able to maintain it, before that extensive and learned body. This we see he did not attempt.

If that kind of evidence, contended for by my opponent, were complete, I have no special objection to its admission. But that is not the fact. That this text, has been "absent from *every* place, where it *must* be if *alive*, from the fifteenth century, up to the first, has never been proved; but the reverse has been amply supported.

After stating and illustrating the *power of negative evidence*, the gentleman goes on to observe:—"The true state of the case is this: If the passage was actually written by St. John, it would undoubtedly be found in the best and most ancient Greek manuscripts; that we should certainly find it in the great majority of them; that it would appear in the different translations made near the days of the Apostles; that it should be quoted by the fathers in their controversies with the Anti-Trinitarians, and must certainly be found in their works, particularly in the writings of Athanasius, who was the great champion of the Trinitarian cause in the early part of the fourth century." My opponent goes on to say, "The burden of proof, the laboring oar, belongs wholly to those who would *impose* a passage as genuine, the word of a sacred penman; and it must be proved by *positive* evidence, *competent* evidence, *sufficient* evidence; *such* evidence as reaches back, in its testimony, to the Apostolic age."

This is particularly necessary in the case of a *contested passage*, and still more so of so *singular a passage*; one pertaining to a vastly interesting subject, which has been the grand theme of violent dispute from the very early ages of the church to the present period."

The above statement is an abridgment of nearly three pages of my opponent's discourse. In condensing, however, I have taken great care to preserve the strength of his arguments; to which I shall now reply. His first position is, "If this passage was actually written by St. John, it would undoubtedly be found in the *best* and *most* ancient Greek manuscripts."

What *he* would consider as the *best* Greek manuscripts, I cannot tell; unless he means such ones as have the least in them relating to the Trinity, and its kindred doctrines. I am very willing to admit, that the age of manuscripts is of great importance. But, to meet the point, I would observe, the gentleman's argument appears to be this: If 1 John v. 7, were a genuine text, "it would be found in the most ancient Greek manuscripts." The Alexandrian and Vatican manuscripts are the *most* ancient; the text in dispute is *not* found in them; therefore, it is spurious. If the most ancient manuscripts included the autograph of St. John, his argument would be invincible. That, however, with many others which have been transcribed from it, are lost in the revolution of time. The Alexandrian manuscript, which is written in the Greek character, is allowed to be the oldest in the world; but Wetstein admits that it is of no higher antiquity than the close of the 5th century. He has given great attention to the subject; and as that manuscript does not contain the text in debate, *he*, being an Anti-Trinitarian, would readily allow it all the credit it could derive from age or any other circumstance. But, as the want of the text in

question in this and the Vatican manuscript, was acknowledged in my sermons, and accounted for, the reader is referred to my arguments. I must dissent from the conclusion of my opponent, that "if the passage was actually written by St. John, it would be found in the *best* and *most* ancient Greek manuscripts." Every candid mind must be convinced that the case *may* be otherwise. My opponent's next position is, that "if the passage be genuine," we should certainly find it in the great majority of the ancient Greek manuscripts.

I will only say, at present, to this argument, that if a sufficient reason can be assigned for the want of the text in *some* of the ancient manuscripts, it will also account, in a great measure, for the want of it "in the *great majority* of them." I might reply more largely; but I shall be under the necessity of using the same arguments in answering my opponent hereafter.

His next position is: "If the passage was actually written by St. John, it would appear in the different translations made near the days of the Apostles."

To this I answer: As the art of printing was not understood in the early ages, and all depended on the pen, the translations themselves were in manuscript; and, therefore, they were liable to the same erasures and omissions as the Greek manuscripts.

In relation to printing, my opponent says, "which noble art, blessed be God, secures the church, through all future ages, from the imposition of forgery."

In all his statements, he goes evidently on the ground that forgery was a very easy thing; but that erasures and omissions were impracticable. By such a method of reasoning, three things are effected; namely, he exculpates the Arians, criminales the Orthodox, and destroys a text, whose very sound deprives him of patience, and calls for

all the powers of his mind in anathemas against it, I think, however, that this "noble art," as he elegantly calls printing, is as necessary to "secure the Church, through all future ages, from the imposition" of erasing and omitting, as from forgery and insertion.

My opponent's next position is: "If the passage was actually written by St. John, it would have been quoted by the fathers in their controversies with the Anti-Trinitarians; and must certainly be found in their works, particularly in the writings of Athanasius."

I reply: This, no doubt, is to be expected. Their writings, however, might have been mutilated, as well as the Sacred Oracles, by the same hands, and for the same reasons. But history testifies, that in this respect, we have the evidence which the gentleman requires. In proof of this, the reader is referred to the third sermon, page 42—48. We have, therefore, as great evidence that the text in dispute was quoted by the ancient fathers, as can be expected at this distance of time.

But the gentleman proceeds in saying, "The burden of proof, the laboring oar, belongs wholly to those who would impose" this text on mankind, as a sacred passage.

Surely, we have no right to object against laboring in defence of the inspired writings. I would neither receive the text myself, nor recommend a belief of its authenticity to others, without a conviction that it bears the indubitable marks of divine authority.

But my opponent says, with an air of triumph, that the text in view "must be *substantiated, proved*, and rendered *certainly* genuine, by *positive* evidence, *competent* evidence; *ancient* evidence, *sufficient* evidence, such evidence as reaches back in its testimony to the period of the Apostolic age, and is attended with such corroborating considerations, as to recommend it to the impartial mind." He adds,

“This is particularly necessary in the case of a *contested passage*; and still more so, of so *singular a passage* as the one now in question.”

My reply to this high-sounding argument, is: In the historical evidence which was adduced in my 3d sermon, we have *ancient* evidence, and, I think, *sufficient* evidence, to convince men whose minds are not hostile to Trinitarian doctrines.

But the gentleman gives us *two grand reasons* for requiring such a *host* of evidence to prove the authority of the text in debate. The first is, “it is a *contested passage*,” and the second, “it is a *singular passage*.” To his first appalling argument, I say, if being “*contested*,” is a sufficient reason to look on the text with a jealous eye, the whole Bible is in the very same situation. Volumes have been written to prove that the Scriptures at large are an imposition on mankind; and by men who have gloried in their philosophical talents, extensive erudition, independence of mind, and deep research. If my opponent’s argument is allowed to have any weight, we must stand in doubt of every part of that which we call the word of God. His second reason against the authority of the text, is its being “so *singular a passage*.” If all the difficulties which are charged upon it by the gentleman, were *real* ones, it is surely a “*singular passage*.” But, I must say, with the celebrated Dr. Doddridge, “I am persuaded that the words contain an important truth;” a truth expressed in a decent and intelligible manner, whether they are spurious or genuine. I cannot discover in them, by the help of all that has been said, “absurdity, contradiction, abomination,” or “barbarism.” The text certainly expresses, with great clearness, a plain Bible doctrine; as has been largely proved in my sermons on it. On these two reasons, I think nothing more need be said.

The gentleman, however, proceeds in saying, that the text in question, "pertaining to a vastly interesting subject, which has been a grand theme of violent dispute, from the very early ages of the Church to the present period," is not to "be received as genuine," unless it be "substantiated" in the manner which he has stated.

To this, my reply is: The great majority of the Church, clergy and laity, in all ages, have never thought of questioning the sacred authority of the text. My opponent speaks of it as having "been a theme of violent dispute in all ages." But, that its advocates have treated their antagonists with violence, remains to be proved. They may have suffered on this account, by the hands of the Roman Church; but for that, we deny any responsibility. If the Papal Hierarchy are called Trinitarians, we ought not to be charged with their doings; seeing there is no connection between us in religious matters. They have persecuted us; to a far greater degree than they have the Anti-Trinitarians. There has, however, been great *violence* used in this case, as I have largely proved in my third sermon on the text. I still think, that those men who treated evangelical Trinitarians as I have mentioned, were *as* likely to have been guilty of erasing and omitting it, as their opponents were of its forgery and insertion. It has been shown that Dr. Scott was fully of this opinion; and he was once an Anti-Trinitarian. See the 3d sermon, page 38. To use the words of my opponent, I am surely, in this opinion, "ranking with one of the wisest and worthiest of men." But I shall now pass by some of his observations, as they have in effect been already answered.

The next thing in his discourse which I feel bound to notice, is: "The doctrine of the Trinity, whether founded in the Scripture or not, was advocated by *some* in the second, and very generally by the Bishops in the third cen-

tury, though not without violent opposition from the *common people*, as is confessed by Tertullian, Basil, and others. It was finally established, by a general council, in the early part of the fourth century, and became the reigning creed of Christendom. At this time lived Arius, who called it in question with great zeal. It became a violent subject of controversy throughout the whole Christian world. Anathemas were poured upon the head of Arius and his followers, by the Orthodox; and though Arius was restored to good standing in the Church, by an emperor who favored his cause, yet he soon came to a tragical end, probably by poison."

As I view the above statement to be very incorrect, and interlarded with some painful and unsupported insinuations, a very particular answer is deemed necessary. It is more than insinuated by the gentleman in opposition, that "the Trinitarian doctrine" was but little known in the Christian world, until some time in the second century; and then advocated only by "*some*." But according to approved ecclesiastical historians, the Church was orthodox, from the very days of the Apostles, for three whole centuries. The exception from this statement, was very small indeed. In respect to the Church through the whole of the first century, Milner says: "The divinity of Christ, the atonement, justification by faith, regeneration by the Holy Ghost, and election, were doctrines of the primitive Church; in view and belief of which, the grace of God was *so richly* and *gloriously* displayed in the conversion of *many* souls." T. Abr. page 58. He says likewise, in page 86: "It appears, that a denial of the divinity of Christ could not find a person that was suffered to remain in the Church, in the course of 200 years. Every Christian, of any eminence for judgment and piety, unequivocally held an opposite language." Concerning Irenæus,

who died in the beginning of the third century, Milner says: "He agrees with *all* the primitive Christians in the doctrine of the Trinity, and makes use of the 45th Psalm to prove the Deity of Christ." Page 89. The complexion of religious sentiment in the third century, may be seen by what this historian says of the Novatians; that they "separated themselves from the general Church, not on the ground of doctrine, but of discipline." Page 118.

My opponent acknowledges, that "the doctrine of the Trinity was very generally advocated by the *Bishops* in the third century;" but, with "*violent* opposition from the *common people*." I cannot tell from what source the gentleman received his information on this subject; nor is it very material, as its accuracy is distinctly denied.

With respect to "the common people," permit me to remark, that unless they were members of the Christian churches, *their* opinion has nothing to do in this case. The Roman Empire, in the third century, was under heathen government; and, therefore, we may be well assured that they were *all* opposed to the doctrine in view, from the Emperor on the throne, down to the peasant in his cottage. "The Bishops," no doubt, were opposed by *such* "common people," as well as by those of distinguished rank in point of science, property, and power. But, if by "the common people," be meant those who professed the Christian religion, I reply, they would not have been admitted into the Church at that time, without an express declaration of their *faith* in the Trinitarian doctrine. There could have been no disagreement, therefore, between them and their Bishops on that subject. We may learn the views of common Christians in that period, from their own words, and in their dying moments. Thousands were slain by the Roman government, for holding to the doctrine of the Trinity; "common people," as well as the Bishops.

Sabina lived in the third century ; and surely she was not a Bishop ; yet she fully believed in a Triune God. When she was arraigned at the bar of Polemon, for being a Christian, that heathen magistrate asked her, "What God dost thou adore?" In that awful situation, she replied, "God Almighty, who made all things, of which we are assured by his *Word* Jesus Christ."—"And what dost thou adore?" said he to Asclepiades ; who readily replied, "Jesus Christ." "What ! is there another God?" "No," said this Christian, "this is the same which we came here to confess." Milner says, "He who worships the Trinity in Unity, will find no difficulty in reconciling these two confessions."

When Lepidus, another Roman officer, asked Pionius, "What God do you adore?" he answered, "Him that made heaven and earth." The Judge proceeded, "You mean him that was crucified?" To this the martyr said, "I mean Him whom God the Father hath sent for the salvation of men." It appears very clearly from these statements, that the Christians were then perfectly united in respect to the Trinity in Unity, the Deity of Christ, and his atonement.

If, however, "by the *common people*," my opponent means, the disciples of Cerinthus, Mercion, &c. his remarks may be very true. But, the *real* church, had no more connection with them, than she had with the surrounding heathen. In respect to the Orthodox, Milner says, "They were all one body, of one name, and cordially loved one another as brethren. There were, indeed, many heretics ; but real Christians did not admit them into their communities. The line of distinction was drawn with precision, and a dislike to the person and offices of Christ, and of the real spirit of holiness, discriminated the heretics : and separation from them, while it was the best mark

of benevolence to their souls, preserved the faith and love of the true Christians in genuine purity." Abr. p. 63.

As those ancient heretics, were not embodied with the Orthodox in the same church, neither were they exposed to death with the multitude of true believers, who were slain in the ten heathen persecutions. The historian says of them, "It does not appear from any evidence which I can find, that these men were ever persecuted for their religion. Their doctrine pleased the carnal heart too well to excite a spirit of persecution. They spake of the world, and the world heard them." Abr. p. 58.

The gentleman in opposition, after hinting at the silence of Scripture on the doctrine of the Trinity—the little knowledge the christian world had of it through the first and second centuries—the opposition that was made to it by "the common people" in the third century, says, "It was finally established, by a general council in the early part of the fourth century, and became the reigning creed of christendom."

He refers, undoubtedly, to the famous council of Nice. It commenced in the twenty-fifth year of that century, by the special order of Constantine the Great; and the object of it was, to effect a settlement of the grand dispute, between the Arians and the Orthodox. That celebrated council, consisted of three hundred and eighteen Bishops, who were assembled from all parts of the christian world. After their decision on the case at issue, the famous Arius, "was deposed from the ministry, and excommunicated from the church. Twenty-two ministers, out of three hundred and eighteen, only adhered to his cause. At this council, was formed the Nicene creed, sound in itself, but hated by Anti-Trinitarians then, and in every subsequent period of time. Many, who composed that council, had lived to see a considerable part of the third century, and

had endured unparalleled sufferings for Christ, in the heathen persecutions. They were acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and with the views of the church respecting the Trinity, from then, up to the apostles. In a long series of persecutions, they had evinced the sincerity of their love to God, and attachment to his truth."

The historian says, "Apostolical discernment and piety, in no inconsiderable degree, animated the spirit of the Nicene fathers. Not a few of them bore on their bodies "the marks of the Lord Jesus." One, debilitated by the application of hot iron to both his hands; some deprived of both their eyes: others, of their legs. A croud of martyrs collected in one body." Abr. p. 172

We have no reason to suppose, in the view of this account, that they came together to *impose a new doctrine* on the christian church; but, to vindicate "the *faith* which was once delivered to the saints," and to cut off her heretical members. Duty required these steps to be taken.

But my opponent says—"Anathemas were poured upon the head of Arius and his followers, by the Orthodox." The expression "*anathemas*," is very strong indeed; but, it amounts to no more than excommunication from the communion of sound Christians. The church is commanded to do this in these words, which are of divine authority:—"A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that such an one is subverted; being condemned of himself."

Concerning Arius, the gentleman adds; "though he was restored to good standing in the church, by an emperor who favored his cause; yet, he came to a tragical end—probably by poison." Constantine was this emperor. He was fond of peace and union in the church, to a fault; but, he was strictly orthodox in his own sentiments. He was not so fully aware of the duplicity of Arius, as the

Bishops were; and, therefore, he was more easily imposed upon by that artful heretic. There was some fear in the mind of Constantine, that the orthodox clergy, were prejudiced against him, on other grounds than doctrine. It was the *man*, and not his *heresy*, which the emperor favored.

Milner says "Constantine himself, was not to be prevailed on to admit Arius into the church, unless he were convinced of his orthodoxy. He sent for him to the palace, and asked him plainly, whether he agreed to the Nicene decrees. Arius, without hesitation, subscribed: the emperor ordered him to swear: he assented to this also. Constantine, whose scruples were now overcome, ordered the Bishop to receive him into the church the next day."

The Arians then began to rejoice, and the church to weep. Both parties knew very well, that although Arius had subscribed to the Nicene creed, his principles remained the same. The Bishop, spent the time in solemn fasting and prayer, for divine interposition in that affecting case. "The next day," says Milner, "seemed to be a triumphant one to the Arians: the heads of the party paraded through the city with Arius in the midst. When they came nigh to the forum of Constantine, a sudden terror, with a disorder of the bowels, seized Arius. He retired, and then fainted; and his bowels were poured out with a vast effusion of blood." "Thus," says the historian, "God sent deliverance, and confounded the adversaries of Zion."

This, is what my opponent calls "a tragical end—probably destroyed by poison." But the word, "*probably*," is all the evidence of the thing, that he has produced. To fasten such a charge upon the Orthodox, something of the testimony is necessary, which he demands to prove the authority of the text in dispute.

After the death of Arius, my opponent says,—"**His doctrine, however gained ground with astonishing rapidity**

under the reign of two emperors, and seemed for a *season*, to bid fair to become the dominant religion, especially in the *East*, where it prevailed far more generally than in the *West*. At length, Trinitarianism gained a complete victory, and the cause of Arius was suddenly extinguished. Trinitarianism became the order of the day, from the reign of Justinian, down through all the dark ages, until the time of the reformation."

On what the gentleman has now said, a few brief remarks may be made. It is very true, that Arianism spread its baleful wings over the christian world, almost entirely; and, with a rapidity that was *mournful*, as well as "astonishing." My opponent says—"It seemed for a *season*, to bid fair to become the dominant religion." The Arians, no doubt, then anticipated an everlasting triumph of their deleterious cause. But, it was only "for a *season*," that this smoke of the pit, darkened the christian horizon. The gentleman's expression "a *season*," is very indefinite. Its duration, however was, above one half of the fourth century, the whole of the fifth, and more than half of the sixth century; according to his own calculation; for, the emperor Justinian, died in the year 566. This *season*, therefore, was more than two hundred years.

It seems to be the object of my opponent, in calling the reign of Arianism "a *season*," to impress the mind with such a view of its shortness, that no advantage could have been taken, of erasing the text in debate, from the manuscripts and versions of Scripture then in use, nor in forming others, in which it might have been omitted. He appears to keep his eye on this point, as a thing of the first importance to his cause. But, immediately after the Nicene council, which was in the 25th year of the fourth century, Arianism prevailed to such a degree in the Roman empire, that Athanasius, who is called "the champion of Or-

thodoxy," was banished. The Nicene creed, therefore, with the *men*, and those *parts of Scripture* which supported it, must have experienced much opposition, through a period of time, not less than two hundred and fifty years. The exertions of men, on that side, to silence the sacred passages which are against them, we fully understand; and we may be well assured that their predecessors have been animated with the same spirit.

The gentleman, closes his statement with these words; "Trinitarianism became the order of the day, from the reign of Justinian, down through all the dark ages, until the time of the reformation."

As he says, it was a time of great darkness indeed; and long, being upwards of one thousand years. But, if the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, gave that era its sable aspect, the present day is not very luminous; for, the reformed churches as fully believe it now, as the church of Rome ever did. It seems to be my opponent's opinion, that such a long period of darkness, gave a fine opportunity to *forge, insert* and *impose* the text in debate. The doctrine of the Trinity, however, is not of Papal origin. It was firmly believed in the earliest times of christianity, and when the church was in her greatest purity; being supported by what was deemed "*sufficient evidence*;" and therefore, the Roman Hierarchy were not under the necessity of fabricating evidence in its favor. It does not appear, that it was ever the desire of the Roman clergy to multiply manuscripts, or versions of the Scriptures; but, to keep them wholly out of the sight of the laity. If we take into view the nature of their scheme, we may easily see, that they were under a greater temptation to erase some part of the decalogue, than to forge and insert the text in dispute. By the account which my opponent has given us, the doctrine of the Trinity was not opposed in

the dark ages: and, of course, there was no need of forging Scripture for its support. He acknowledges, however, that "it became a subject of violent controversy throughout the christian world," from the days of Arius to the commencement of the Papal reign. If the disputed text be a forgery, there can be no doubt, that the crime was committed in the Arian period of time; for then, such a passage was necessary; and no one supposes that it was forged since the reformation. We may be well assured, that the Arians were heavily pressed with the arguments of the Orthodox; and, therefore, they had as great need to spike the artillery which was in operation against them, as their opponents had to forge such "a canon of war," as the text under consideration.

The gentleman in opposition, goes on to draw some inferences from the arguments which he has advanced.

His first conclusion is;—"Now the argument stands thus—Had 1 John, 5. 7, been known, or contained in John's epistle, this was the time when it was wanted."

This, I cheerfully admit; for "the time" to which he alludes, is the Arian period. My opponent, seems to press me with this supposed difficulty, namely;—If the text had existed then, it would have been largely quoted by the writers of that time—they did not use it;—and, therefore, it was not known by them. In my sermons on the passage, it *was* shown, that Jerom cited it in the beginning of the fifth century, and Vigilius at the close of it. Augustine, Marcus, Celedensis, and Phebadius, used it in the fourth century; and, if we may rely on historical testimony, it *was* cited by Athanasius. It was left as a testimony against the Arians, at the conference held at Carthage, in the fifth century.

No doubt, the writings of those ancient fathers, have suffered greatly by the lapse of ages; and perhaps by the

hands of men. When the Arians had the christian world so long under their controul, they had *some* opportunity to alter the works of the early fathers, as well as to mutilate the Scriptures. If it should be said—These things cannot be proved against the Arians; my answer is, neither can forgery be supported against the Orthodox; yet, the one or the other of these evils *has* taken place.

The next conclusion of my opponent, is, that the Arians, for the reason which he has assigned, could not have altered the Scriptures, nor the writings of the fathers, if they had been so disposed. He says, “So barefaced an attempt could neither have escaped detection, nor fail of forming a notorious item of depravity in the history of that abominable period.”

The gentleman, undoubtedly, means the Arian “period;” and, why *he* should call it “abominable,” is really mysterious:—But I have no desire to oppose him on that ground. I am fully convinced, that, if in the age in view, they could not have been guilty of erasure, nor of omissions, they *have* of forgery and insertion; and *either* of these cases must form such “a notorious item of depravity in their history” as *he* thinks to be impossible. His argument goes on the ground, that erasures and omissions, were crimes that would have stained the character of that age—that these things were so difficult, that they could not have been done; and, that the Anti-Trinitarians were so upright, they would not have attempted them. In respect to omitting and erasing, he says—“There is no such charge exhibited against the Arians, in either the historical or theological writers of that age.” This stands acknowledged; but, does it certainly follow, that no such crimes were committed? There is no charge of forging and inserting any text in our translation “exhibited against the”

Orthodox, "by the historical and theological writers of that age," nor of any age antecedent to the fifteenth century; yet, it is acknowledged by my opponent himself, that the text in debate *was* quoted seven hundred years before; and, therefore, according to *his* mode of reasoning we may infer, that it was never forged.

In my sermons on this subject, it has been clearly shown that, *adding* is as great a sin as *omitting*; and, far more difficult to be done without detection. If the gentleman's arguments on this head have weight, they prove that 1 John 5. 7, has neither been erased, omitted nor forged; yet, he says, "It is a vile interpolation," and lashes the *supposed* forger, as "a hotheaded Trinitarian zealot." Certainly, such reasoning is inadmissible; and far beneath the talents of my acute and learned opponent.

Notwithstanding the mysterious silence of "the historical and theological writers" of ancient times, the text in dispute, must have been either inserted, or erased from the sacred manuscripts; and the impartial mind must be convinced, that one of these crimes must have been committed in that very period of time, in which the controversy about the Trinity agitated the christian world.

In respect to erasing or omitting the text in question, my opponent says, that, after the reign of Justinian, down to the reformation in the sixteenth century, "Anti-Trinitarians have been in a condition altogether inauspicious for so wild an undertaking." But, if that be admitted; surely, the Trinitarians were not *then* under any necessity of forging a passage, to support *their* cause against a fallen enemy. It was in the Arian period of time, therefore, that the *mischief* must have been done in relation to the text under consideration, which ever of the contending parties has been guilty.

But my opponent, after showing that the Anti-Trinitarians could not have erased nor omitted the text, proceeds to what *he* seems to consider as invincible conclusions against its authenticity. Through divine assistance, therefore, I shall endeavor to meet them in the next discourse; for which, may the Lord prepare us. AMEN.

SERMON VII.

I JOHN, V, 7.

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

As my answer to the gentleman, in opposition, is not yet completed, I must proceed with it.

He seems to be very confident, that the Anti-Trinitarians, could not have been guilty of erasing this passage from the scriptures, nor of omitting it in their transcriptions. Some reasons for thinking otherwise have been given, and more will be offered.

One of my opponent's formidable conclusions, runs in the following summary manner:—"So, we may not only expect, but *be absolutely sure*, that, on the supposition of the genuineness of the three heavenly witnesses, the passage must, and undoubtedly does, appear in the best and most ancient Greek manuscripts—in the most ancient and respectable versions—in the controversial writings of the Trinitarian fathers of every age—and in the orthodox creeds and catechisms which have regulated the faith of Christendom."

Some of these objections have been fully answered; and others have been passed by, to which I shall make my re-

served replies. This method has been adopted, to preserve, as far as possible, a correct arrangement, and avoid repetition.

The gentleman, after closing his *supposed* invincible conclusions, proceeds to mourn over the fallen text, in the following plaintive expressions ;—" Alas ! for the famous passage, it is not contained in any *Greek* manuscript of respectability, early or late now in existence !"

But to this, my reply is ;—If it is not contained " in any *respectable* Greek manuscript, this seems to be an acknowledgment that, it may be found in *some* which my opponent is unwilling to honor with that elevation of character. Allowing, that there are no such Greek manuscripts *now* in being, does that fairly prove, that there never have been any such manuscripts on earth ? Are we bound wholly to overlook in this case, historical testimony ? There are no such cities as the ancient Babylon, Nineveh and Tyre, now to be found on the globe ; is it therefore, a just conclusion, to say, that no such cities ever existed ? In my third sermon on the text, it was made to appear, that, " Laurentius Valla, an Italian nobleman of great erudition, undertook a correction of the Greek manuscripts of the New-Testament, in the 14th century ; which was 100 years before the days of Erasmus. If the historical testimony which I have adduced, may be relied on, he, " by assiduous and long continued exertions, obtained *seven* Greek manuscripts ; and " the text in debate " was found in them all." Since that event, five hundred years have elapsed ; and, therefore, those manuscripts, like many others, are lost with time.

It is acknowledged by my opponent himself, that " 132 manuscripts have been examined by the learned with a particular reference to this passage, and have all been found silent in relation to the three heavenly witnesses." He

says likewise, that there are but 109 of these to be found now. According to his statement, we may see, that 23 of his own boasted manuscripts have perished since the days of Erasmus; for, he has told us himself, that, from the reign of Justinian to the reformation, the subject was laid asleep; and, therefore, during that time, no manuscripts would have been examined. We need not be surprised, if our seven Greek manuscripts have been lost in the lapse of 500 years; seeing, that 23 of his have perished in 400 years. We have as good reason to believe that those seven Greek manuscripts, which history says were in *our* favor, once existed, as he has that the twenty-three have had a being, which testified against us. It is not to be doubted, that there have been many of both kinds of manuscripts, which are now lost with time. The evidence of history in such cases, is not to be discarded.

In what I have said of Laurentius Valla, the truth of it is admitted by M. Simon, who was an enemy to the text in question. History says, that the *Glossa Ordinaria* was made by Walefrid Strabo, in the ninth century, and from Greek manuscripts, some of which were more ancient than any now in being. The character of his commentary, stands very high in the opinion of an eminent Anti-Trinitarian writer; and, therefore, it may be consistently esteemed by Trinitarians. The number of Greek manuscripts, which the writer of the *Glossa Ordinaria* had under his eye, cannot be ascertained by me; but, it seems that he felt himself warranted to insert in that work, the text in question. Our text is likewise found in Jerom's Version. It was made in the beginning of the fifth century; and in doing it, he solemnly asserts, that he was guided by the Greek manuscripts. He says, that the text "had been adulterated, mistranslated and omitted on purpose to elude the truth."

The Rev. William Jones, observes with great propriety that Jerom "had a better opportunity of examining the true merits of the cause than we can have at this distance of time." As he was convinced of its authenticity, we may repose great confidence in his opinion, on the ground of his abilities, excellent character, and early standing in the Christian church.

Robert Stephens, found the text contained in *nine* of his *sixteen* Greek manuscripts, according to the the testimony of William Jones.

When the Emperor Charlemagne furnished the divines of his age with *all* the manuscripts which could then be procured in his dominion ; it appears, that they felt themselves authorized to retain this passage in their correctorium.

Thus, we have an authentic account of sixteen Greek manuscripts, in which the text in debate was found ; namely, the *seven* used by Laurentius Valla, in the fourteenth century, and the *nine* in the possession of Robert Stephens ; who lived since the time of the reformation, which commenced in the early part of the sixteenth century. We have the testimony of historians, that Walafrid Strabo used *Greek* manuscripts in the *ninth* century, in forming his Glossa Ordinaria ; and Jerom likewise, in the fifth century, in making his Versions. Allowing that those manuscripts have *all* perished, and that there are, as my opponent says, 109 Geeek manuscripts now in being, without the disputed text ; I cannot see that it would destroy the evidence which has been produced. The want of the passage in the manuscripts which have been mentioned, has in some measure been explained, and, therefore, need not be repeated.

My opponent's next conclusion is,—if the text in question were genuine, it would appear "in the *most* ancient

and respectable versions." He then mentions the following early versions, in which it is not to be found ; " namely, " the two Syriac, the Coptic and Schidie versions, formed for Upper and Lower Egypt ; the Ethiopic, Arabic, Sclavonian and Armenian versions."

On the supposition that his statement is correct, it must be admitted that, they afford no evidence in favor of the text under consideration. Those versions, however, were probably made in the Arian period, and in the *East* which is a circumstance of great weight in accounting for their silence in respect to the passage. My opponent says himself, that immediately after the death of Arius, his doctrine gained ground with astonishing rapidity, and seemed to bid fair to become the dominant religion, especially in the *East*, where it prevailed far more generally than in the West." The want of the text in question, in the versions that the gentleman has named, may be one reason for those nations exchanging Christianity for Mahomedanism, and the Scriptures for the Koran. But he acknowledges, that it is only in the *correct* editions of the Armenian version, the text in dispute is wanting ; and that is admitting, that it does appear in the *incorrect* editions of it. We may be assured, wherever this Trinitarian text is found, that manuscript, version, or edition, will be deemed *incorrect*, for that very reason. He admits, that the passage is found in the Vulgate version, with the exception of " 29 of its fairest and best manuscripts." No doubt, the want of the text, will constitute a great degree of fairness and excellency in his esteem.

The Vulgate was made for the *western* part of the Christian world, where my opponent says, the doctrine of Arius did not so generally prevail. This fact fully accounts for the text being found in that version. The gentleman, however, attempts to remove every argument arising from

this consideration, by saying,—“The Vulgate is the version of the church of Rome, that mother of harlots, that mistress of abominations, who has mystery inscribed upon her forehead.”

These accusations, however, amount to nothing in relation to the subject before us. It was made evident in a former part of this controversy, that the church of Rome had no motive to forge this disputed text ; and, therefore, its being in the Vulgate translation, is highly in favor of its authenticity. We are not told, by my opponent *when* this translation was made, but merely that it was made for the use of the Roman church. But as Latin was the language of that Empire, the church there, stood in need of such a translation from the time of her origin, which reaches back to the very age of the apostles. The church of Rome, was as sound in the faith as any of the churches of Christ, until the beginning of the seventh century. This consideration sets the Vulgate on as high ground, as any translation whatever.

It is conceded by my opponent, that there are *two* versions, in which the text in debate appears ; namely, the Vulgate, and the *incorrect* editions of the Armenian version. But the author, which I have quoted in my sermons, says, “The ancient version into the Armenian language, hath *always* contained it.”

It appears also in the Italic, which is the oldest version of the New-Testament, having been made *near* the days of the apostles. Out of nine versions of the Holy Scriptures, therefore, the text, it seems, appears in *three*.

The gentleman in opposition, in another of his conclusions says, “On supposition of the genuineness of the passage, it would be in the controversial writings of the Trinitarian fathers of every age.” But, as I have largely replied to this argument, needless repetition must be avoided.

The *last* of his conclusions is, that, "If it were a genuine text, it would be found in the orthodox creeds and catechisms which have regulated the faith of Christendom.

On this, I will just say, if it be not found "in the creeds and catechisms," which are "orthodox" and ancient, the omission was not for the want of a belief of its authenticity; for it was not disputed until the fifteenth century; and since the art of printing has been invented it has appeared in *all* the editions of the New-Testament, in *every* language. This is surely, giving it as high a standing as its insertion "in creeds and catechisms."

But I have shown from high authority, that "this verse of St. John was inserted in the ancient service-book of the Latin Church—in the confession of faith of the Greek Church—and also in their Liturgy or public service-book." On this head, therefore, I shall say no more at present, but proceed to some other objections which seem to be deemed formidable by my ingenious opponent.

In proof of the spuriousness of the text, he says,—“All the libraries of Europe, and of the world have been challenged, for years, by the learned and highly respectable *Trinitarian* Griesbach, to produce one single *decent* Greek manuscript, ancient or modern, which contains it.”

When such epithets, as "*learned and highly respectable*," are given by the Anti-Trinitarians to a writer, there is reason to fear, that he is nigh to *their* sentiments. No doubt Griesbach is a scholar, and very industrious in collating ancient manuscripts; but his challenging "all the libraries of Europe, and of the world," as my opponent states, is not like the tone of a man, who feels a sacred regard for Trinitarian doctrines.

But the gentleman says farther,—“No one of the learned Trinitarians has met this confident challenge. No

one has dared to pretend that there is any such manuscript existing, in any part of the globe."

It seems the challenge was given "to produce a *decent Greek* manuscript, ancient or modern." It is acknowledged by my opponent himself, that there are three Greek manuscripts which contain the passage; namely, "the Berlin, the Dublin and that of Matthæi." It is admitted that they have existed ever since the fifteenth century; and, if they are not entitled to the high character of *ancient*, surely they may be called *modern* Greek manuscripts. As the challenge is, "to produce either ancient or modern Greek manuscripts," they could not have been set aside on the ground of their age. But it was, perhaps on account of not being *decent*, that they were rejected by Griesbach; or for that reason the Trinitarian divines did not dare present them. To illustrate this case, the gentleman says,— "The Dublin manuscript is a transcript, in part, of Cardinal Zimminic's edition, and contains its typographical mistakes." He says likewise, the *Greek* manuscript of Matthæi, is only a copy of the printed editions of Erasmus and Beza."

But why should printed editions of the Scriptures be copied into Greek manuscripts, unless it were to give the appearance of authenticity to the text in debate? Such insinuations, are implications of Trinitarian honesty, but no hints must be given by us, that Anti-Trinitarians have ever had any inclination, to lay unhallowed hands on the Oracles of God. If we would only believe their word, however, their time and eminent learning, have been piously occupied in purifying the Scriptures, from Trinitarian adulterations.

But my opponent goes on to say,— "The Dublin manuscript is not earlier than the 15th century, probably forged by the British divines, to deceive Erasmus; and in—

duce him to put 1 John 5. 7, into his Greek Testament." He then asserts,—“ So the only *three* Greek manuscripts in existence, which contain the passage of the three heavenly witnesses, are all written since the invention of the art of printing ; for which no cause can be assigned, that I know of, except the base and wicked design of manufacturing authority for a vile interpolation, which has not the countenance of a solitary Greek manuscript on earth.” The modesty of these assertions is submitted to my hearers. Admitting, however, that the gentleman’s statement correct, it is far from settling the subject in dispute. If such Greek manuscripts, as Griesbach requires, are not to be found now, this does not prove that there never have been any, neither does it invalidate the historical testimony which is adduced in my sermons. You see my opponent allows the dignified name of Greek manuscripts, to 109 only ; but, that is not one to a thousand which must have existed since the apostolic age.

In ancient times, every Arian public library might have been furnished with such a manuscript of the Scriptures ; and so might every family of that community, whose property was adequate to the expense of writing it. In the eastern section of the Christian world, manuscripts and versions, without the text in debate, were probably numerous ; and the church in the western section, might have been less careful in preserving what are now deemed the only proper vouchers of the true reading of the Scriptures. From an excessive fondness of the Latin language, the church of Rome, preferred the Vulgate version to all others. This might have made them very indifferent about securing the Greek manuscripts which contained the text. There is no great want of it in the Latin manuscripts, which were used in the western section of Christendom ; where the gentleman says, Arianism did not so generally prevail.

Since the art of printing has been in operation, there must be an agreement in all the copies and editions of the Scriptures. It was otherwise when all depended on the pen. A manuscript then, could easily have been formed according to the mind of the writer, and of those, for whose use the copy was designed. It might lie, in such hands for ages, without being exposed to the critical eye of any one who would compare it with other manuscripts, or expose its inaccuracies to the world. As this may have been the case, the internal character of a given text is, the best evidence of its spuriousness or authenticity. On this ground, the passage in debate stands high, bearing the marks of divinity and agreement with the Scriptures in general; as has been largely proved in my discourses on the subject.

But my opponent proceeds to say of the Greek manuscripts, that two of them "are considered by the learned, as holding the first rank, in respect to age and correctness. These are called, the Vatican and Alexandrian manuscripts." He says, "the Vatican manuscript stands *first*, in point of seniority, and other circumstances, which give dignity to its character." Mr. Emlyn, however, who is a distinguished Anti-Trinitarian, gives the *first rank* to the Alexandrian copy, according to the authorities which I have consulted. The gentleman places the age of the Vatican manuscript very high—even up to the beginning of the third century: but, I think the evidence, on which this opinion is founded, is vague and uncertain, consisting principally in the conjectures of men who wish to give it weight on that account.

The author quoted by me, says—"The most ancient Greek manuscript which is now known to exist, is the Alexandrian, for which, Wetstein, who seems to have considered the question with great attention, claims no higher

antiquity than the close of the fifth century." If this account is correct, it was made when Arianism was in the very zenith of its triumph; and made in the east, that very part of the world where my opponent says, Arianism "more generally prevailed."

There is one circumstance, which greatly confirms me in the belief, that the Alexandrian and Vatican manuscripts, are of Arian origin and character; and that is, their reading of Rev. 1. 10, 11. In the English translation, St. John says in that passage—"I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, what thou seest, write in a book." This passage is of as much importance in relation to the supreme Deity of Christ, as 1 John, 5. 7, is, in respect to the Trinity in unity; and they are both completely silenced by these manuscripts.

On this text, Dr. Doddridge says—"It has done more than any other in the Bible, toward preventing me from giving in to *that scheme*, which would make our *Lord Jesus Christ* no more than a *deified creature*." His remarks as to the effect of this passage on his own mind, shews its *weight* in supporting the proper Divinity of the Redeemer; and we see how completely these famous manuscripts enervate its force and eclipse its glory on that subject.

But the writers of these ancient manuscripts, in making them to read so contrary to our translation, have, I think, rendered their accuracy very suspicious.

Every reader may see at once, that the three first chapters in the book of Revelation, are very remarkable in the manner of their composition. There are seven churches addressed, in seven distinct epistles. In the commencement of each epistle, some of the names, perfections and operations of Christ are mentioned, to turn the

apostle's attention to his majesty, authority and glory. "To the angel," or minister "of the church of Ephesus," he is directed to "write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.—And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead and is alive.—And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he who hath the sharp sword with two edges.—And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass.—And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars.—And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth.—And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

Can we imagine that our Lord would speak of himself in such a glorious manner, in each of these seven epistles, and yet, when he entered into conversation with St. John, respecting these churches in general, speak in the naked manner in which his address appears, in the Alexandrian and Vatican manuscripts; "saying" only, "what thou seest, write in a book:" without giving himself any distinguishing names, perfections, or operations? I really think, that, if 1 John, 5. 7, "bears the marks of forgery upon its very countenance;" Rev. 1. 11, "bears," in these manuscripts, the visible "marks" of mutilation—a mutilation which leaves it divested of that glory and majesty, with which it is clothed in our translation—a mutilation

that destroys its consistency with the chapter in which it stands. In this case the iniquity of so forming these manuscripts, must appear with great clearness to every candid reader. We have no little reason to believe, that the gentleman's 109 Greek manuscripts, form an army, of which, the Alexandrian and Vatican manuscripts are the generals. If we may rely on the testimony of the Rev. Theophilus Lindsey, these manuscripts are *deficient* in most of the texts of primary importance, relating to the Trinity and the Deity of Christ.

In the view of what he has said, my opponent adds,—
 “I submit it to you all, fellow Christians, and to every man's conscience, whether you do not see, in this event, the hand of Divine providence visibly stretched out to preserve the purity of his holy word from the corruptions of man, so ordering things that all the *Greek* manuscripts on earth should, with one accord, down to the days of the invention of printing, bear united and solemnly silent testimony against *so absurd, contradictory and blasphemous an interpolation.*”

In what the gentleman has said, our reason and conscience are addressed in an awfully solemn manner.

But if we are in fact going in opposition to the dictates of our own mind, in adhering to the text in debate, we are exceedingly criminal, and are bound to acknowledge our guilt, and to rely on the spurious passage no more. Eyeing the providence of God in all events is, undoubtedly, a Christian's duty; and it is very becoming in my opponent, to express such a sense of the Divine hand, in preserving the Scriptures from human corruptions.

It is truly pleasing to hear the gentleman calling them “God's holy word;” but it is painful to hear him saying, that 1 John, 5. 7, is “an *absurdity*, a *contradiction*, an *abomination*,” a “*blasphemous*” text, and “a vile *interpo-*”

lation. These charges, however, are very far from being just, whether the passage is spurious or genuine. He displays such a hostility to the doctrine contained in it, as should put us on our guard, as to his arguments against its authority. He says, "the hand of Divine providence" is against the passage; but we should remember, that providence is often deep and mysterious. Very wrong conclusions may be drawn from the dealings of providence. A sacred writer says, of God; "His way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known." Another exclaims, "How unsearchable are his judgments! and his ways past finding out." But, providence has preserved such an evidence of the authenticity of the disputed text, as induces Christians in general to receive it as a testimony of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead.

It may be placed in this situation, that the humble may believe, and the proud be left to think there is sufficient ground to reject it, and to renounce a doctrine, on which, salvation depends. Sinners in general, endeavor to support themselves in their unbelief, by reasoning in conformity to the feelings of their own hearts. Providence is concerned in hardening, as well as in softening the hearts of men. "The Lord of hosts" said to Isaiah, "Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and convert, and be healed." St. Paul says of *some* sinners, "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; God shall send them strong delusion, that they may believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

The providence of God, involving this text in a degree of uncertainty, as some consider it to be, is no more proof of its spuriousness, than the burying of the only copy of the law in the rubbish of the temple, proved, that no such book was ever given to Israel. We think, that we are no more disposed to believe, independently of evidence, than our opponents.

I shall pass over a considerable part of the gentleman's discourse, as answering it would be a recapitulation of arguments, which I have already endeavored to meet. I will just apprise you, however, that mention is made of Mr. Travis, as "a blundering copyist of a French author, called Martyn;" but I intend to make some remarks on Mr. Travis hereafter; and, therefore, I shall drop the matter at present.

There is an observation in what is passed over, in regard to Athanasius; calling him "the god-father of Trinitarianism," the reducer of it "to its present orthodox form." A reply, however, is not deemed necessary; for it has been largely shown that the doctrine of the Trinity in unity, was understood and firmly believed by the church of Christ, long before the days of Athanasius, even up to the time of the apostles.

In the gentleman's next paragraph, some anathemæ appear against the text in question; and a prediction, that it is soon to be annihilated from the book of God. He calls its supporters also "enthusiastic devotees;" but, as these things are not arguments, they require no answer. This discourse may, therefore, be closed with that apostolic injunction; "prove all things; hold fast that which is good." AMEN.

SERMON VIII.

I JOHN, V. 7.

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

THE gentleman in opposition, has been followed through the greater part of his arguments against the Divine authority of this passage ;—but the closing part of his discourse, remains to be answered. As he seems to place great reliance on what he has yet to say, a more particular reply is requisite.

He says, “ One more short argument, and I will relieve your patience.” It is an “ argument which *cannot* fail of its becoming influence with all those, who, as they do not profess to be versed in Biblical criticism, *must* of course, *depend*, in these matters, upon the united decisions of the learned.”

By “ the learned,” on whose “ united decisions,” the unlettered part of mankind “ *must depend*,” my opponent seems to mean, such writers as have signalized themselves in their critical opposition to the text ; for, if the suffrage of “ the learned” were to be taken, we cannot doubt, but the majority would be in its favor. If “ the united decisions of the learned,” were against the passage, it *ought* to

be given up by common readers, and be printed no more in any of the subsequent translations and editions of the New-Testament. It rather appears, however, to be the opinion of my opponent, that all who undertake in favor of the text, are *so deficient* in oriental learning, critical ability, close investigation, and theological integrity, that no confidence can be placed in their judgment.

If this be the case, it is highly necessary that *this class* of "the learned," should immediately produce a corrected translation of the Scriptures, that the *illiterate* and *dependent* part of mankind, may be rescued from the base idolatry of worshipping Jesus Christ ; and, from the crime of resting on his atonement for salvation, instead of their own merits. If Trinitarian forgery, and their imposition in "manufacturing authority for vile interpolations," has led to such a departure from the pure worship of God, it is high time that some *efficient* measures should be taken with the Scriptures. But, alas ! the "*united decisions*" of the Anti-Trinitarians appear to have little effect in reforming the world ; for they do not seem to "commend" themselves to the "*conscience* in the sight of God."

I shall now proceed to examine my opponent's "short," but powerful argument. He commences with saying,— "The passage of the three heavenly-witnesses, in 1 John, 5. 7, namely, these words, "*In heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost : and these three are one ; and there are three that bear record on earth,*" is a passage now admitted by the most eminently learned divines in Europe, of various denominations, Trinitarians as well as others, to be a *vile forgery* ; and so *notoriously* is this the fact, that there is not a learned man, at this day, in Europe, whether divine or civilian, who would degrade his character as a Biblical critic, by venturing on the defence of it."

In this strong sentence, the first thing to be noticed, is,

that all the "learned Trinitarian divines in Europe, admit" this text "to be a vile forgery." This statement is distinctly denied by me; and, in doing it, the following reasons may be offered.

1. The late Rev. Claudius Buchanan, D. D. who held a high rank in England as a pious divine, and a pre-eminent orientalist, whose praise is in the churches, has unequivocally declared, that he fully believed 1 John, 5. 7, to be a genuine text of Scripture. For this fact, I appeal to all who have read his *Christian Researches in Asia*.

2. The late Dr. Scott, also, who both as a divine and a scholar is well known, has given his opinion in favor of the text, as has been clearly shown in my sermons.

3. The Rev. Ralph Wordlaw, who is a very learned and distinguished divine in Scotland, in speaking of this text, suggests no belief of its being "a vile forgery." In respect to its authenticity, I have acknowledged, that he expressed some degree of doubt; but, that is very far from admitting it to be "*a vile interpolation*."

4. There is a case, that is obvious to every one, the consideration of which, *must* reflect great light on this subject. It is this:—New editions of the Scriptures are constantly appearing from the presses of Europe in general, and England in particular, which all contain the verse in question. If the learned, throughout Europe and Great Britain, all *know* that the text in dispute is "*a vile forgery*," why have they not prevented its appearance in every edition of the Bible that has been published, since this conviction has taken place in their minds? Bible Societies are very extensive in that section of the globe; and by their exertions, the Scriptures have been recently translated into many languages, and largely circulated throughout the world; but, we have no account that the text has been left out of any edition or translation what-

ever. If the gentleman's bold assertion be correct, what can we think of the orthodox divines of Europe? *Will they impose "vile forgeries,"* on the poor heathen, for the word of the living God, when they not only *know*, but have *admitted* that they are such? My opponent's assertion, I think, must be questioned on sober reflection, and, doubtless, he would not have ventured it, unless he had received such communications from the British Anti-Trinitarians; but it is surprising, that he should either rely on such information himself, or hold it up to the world as deserving credit.

In his mind, however, this difficulty may be surmounted, by a belief, that no Trinitarian divines are entitled to the honor of being learned, who do not appear in opposition to the text; and that the number of those is so small, that they find themselves incapable of correcting the wilfulness and ignorance of the others. The Anti-Trinitarian divines, seem to flatter themselves with the idea, that they are all learned and great; and that the Trinitarian clergy, are almost universally deficient in these respects. The public mind, however, may differ with them in this matter. Self complacency is natural.

The *second* thing to be noticed in my opponent's sweeping statement, is—"That there is not a learned man, at this day in Europe, whether divine or civilian, who would degrade his character as a biblical critic, by venturing on a defence of this text." He says further—"The learned Porson, in his reply to Travis, has settled this controversy forever."

But, to this assertion, my reply is—If by "*this day*," be meant strictly the present one; it is neither in the gentleman's power, nor in mine, to determine the case. If, however, by "*this day*," be meant, any time past in this enlightened century, he is certainly incorrect in his assertion; for, Dr. Scott, in his note on the text, has ventured

to say many things in its defence. Are we to think he is not "a learned man," a "divine," nor a "civilian?" He had the vanity to think, when he was an Anti-Trinitarian, that few could equal him in mental endowments; which he has freely acknowledged in a book, called, "The Force of Truth," which is an account of his life and conversion.

I cannot say, however, that there has been any elaborate treatises recently written in defence of the text in debate. It is very probable, the European divines on the side of Orthodoxy, may be of the opinion that the passage has been sufficiently vindicated by the writers of former times.

But, if the learned Trinitarians of Europe, dare not "venture their character as Biblical critics," in "defence" of the passage; to act an ingenuous part, they ought to abandon it; but this, they have never done.

My opponent says—"The learned Porson, has settled this controversy forever." If this be in fact the case, Dr. Scott must have known it; and, instead of vindicating the words, he ought to have announced their spuriousness. These considerations must have weight with candid people; and evince the vanity of my opponent's triumphant assertions. What "the learned Porson" has done, I cannot say; but, we may fairly suppose, that the grand arguments on that side of the question have been exhibited by the gentleman himself, the examination of which, is now in progress. We see the difficulties, therefore, with which the orthodox European divines and civilians, would have to contend. I cannot see yet, that they are insuperable; nor how any man would have to "sacrifice his character as a Biblical critic," in facing them.

The next thing in the gentleman's discourse, is, "The celebrated Griesbach, whose critical and purified Greek Testament is now used as the standard in the European Colleges, *taking* the same rank in the literary institutions of *our* country, has left out this passage from his text."

This stands acknowledged. That, however, does not positively prove that the text is an interpolation ; unless the infallibility of that learned critic can be maintained. It is no new thing for great men to undertake against truth, and to influence the public mind on the side of error, to a high degree.

The reasons are before us, which led him to renounce the text in question ; namely, the want of it in the *Greek* manuscripts. He, undoubtedly, felt himself justified as a learned critic, to relinquish it on that ground ; and, being probably *disposed* to do it, he might think, that the evidence he acted on, would be a sufficient apology, in the view of the world. We, however, have a right to judge for ourselves concerning the evidence on which he decided. His “purified Testament,” as my opponent calls it, is corrected in conformity to some of the *Greek* manuscripts ; but, I really believe their accuracy is very questionable, and my reasons for this opinion have been assigned.

In respect to Griesbach’s Testament, my opponent says, with an air of exultation, that, “it is now used as the standard in the European colleges, and is taking the same rank in the literary institutions of our country.” But to this I reply, although his Testament may have its excellencies, it *must* be allowed, that, like all other human productions, it may have also its defects.

With all the boasted accuracy of Griesbach, his reading of 1 Tim. 3. 16 ; “and without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness : he who was manifested in the flesh ;” instead of “God was manifest in the flesh,” as it is in our translation, is boldly disputed by Mr. Wakefield, who is himself an Anti-Trinitarian. Mr. W. contends for the correctness of the English New-Testament in *this* respect ; that instead of “He who,” it ought to be, “*God was* manifest in the flesh ;” but, he endeavors to effect an escape from the meaning of the passage, by an Anti-Trinitarian exposition.

But, there are two considerations in respect to Griesbach's performance, which make me feel some apprehension of danger. The first is—Anti-Trinitarians seem to be anticipating a complete victory over the Orthodox; and his Greek Testament, appears to be one ground on which their hope of this is founded. The *second* consideration is—The learned, on the Orthodox side of the question, seem not to be apprehending any danger from that quarter. But what the event of these high anticipations on the one hand, and such apparent security on the other, will finally amount to, time only can determine. I have some fear; but my prayer is, that it may be groundless. The great Head of the Church, says in one of his instructive parables, that it was “while men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.” The learned are liable to their peculiar prejudices, and exposed to alarming changes, under the operation of certain causes, as well as the illiterate, and less discerning part of men. It was by *some such means*, undoubtedly, that in the Arian period of time, the learned, as well as others, were enveloped with the sable cloud of theological delusion. We must admit, on the principle of analogical reasoning, that such painful scenes may be realized again, in this fallen and God-opposing world. With due deference to, and confidence in the learned among the Orthodox, it behoves the Church to watch, and to take the alarm, whenever the grand doctrines of the gospel are attacked, directly or indirectly. The great adversary is not asleep; and he *may* invent ways of leading the scholar, as well as the unlettered Christian, into the devious paths of heresy and danger. To pollute the fountains of religious knowledge, is the most direct method that *can* be adopted, to defile all the streams which issue from them. In this case, however, our hope must be placed in God; for he is the tower of

defence, both in relation to his written word and redeemed people.

But, my hearers, what is the grand object of such a tremendous and unremitting opposition to 1 John, 5. 7, and *all* the other sacred passages of a similar import?

The Rev. Theophilus Lindsey expressly says,—“The tendency of the whole is to show, that the bulk of Christians, for many ages, have been worshipping *two new Gods*, who are *no Gods at all*, Jesus and the Holy Spirit; putting them on an equality with the Supreme Father and Sovereign Lord of all.”

We may see, therefore, that the grand design of every writer in this school is, to remove the belief of Christ's Deity, and the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost from our mind; and, on that very account, it becomes *us* to look well to *their* criticisms, before we renounce the passages of Scripture, which support these fundamental truths of the Christian system.

But, the feelings of Griesbach, in relation to the *doctrine* of the Trinity may be learned, by a view of the following paragraph, selected from his essay on 1 John, 5. 7. It is contained in my opponent's discourse, and was delivered in this house, with a high tone of approbation and triumph. The paragraph in view, runs in this manner,—“If witnesses *so few, so recent, so suspicious*, and arguments *so utterly frivolous*, as are produced in defence of this passage, are competent to establish the genuineness of a reading, in opposition to such a multitude of *unanswerable* testimonies and arguments—there can be no criterion of truth and falsehood, in criticism, and the *whole* text of the New-Testament, is *unsubstantiated* and *dubious*—and I would undertake, if it were worth while, to defend six hundred *notoriously spurious* and *universally rejected readings*, by testimonies and arguments far more numerous and powerful, than any which are used by the

patrons of *this verse*—and I wish these things may be well considered by those, who may think proper to come forward in a cause, in which the *acuteness* of a *Krittelius*, the *sagacity* of a *Hazellius*, and the *zeal* of Travis (but not according to knowledge, and, therefore, severely castigated by the learned Porson and Marsh) have labored angrily and in vain.”

To say the least of this, I think, it is far from bearing the complexion of Trinitarian language. But the arguments which this writer calls “*few, recent, suspicious, and frivolous,*” some of them have been laid before you, and their strength or imbecility is submitted to your judgment.

What this gigantic Biblical critic, is pleased to call “*unanswerable testimonies and arguments,*” the gentleman in opposition to me, has, doubtless, presented us with some of them, in his elaborate discourse. But, if they be “*unanswerable,*” then all I have said, falls to the ground, as far as it relates to the authenticity of the text in dispute.

The case, my hearers, is now submitted to your candid decision, in respect to the orthodoxy of Griesbach.

I *must* say, that I cannot see how such arguments as have been advanced, in my discourses on the text in question, would destroy the “*criterion of truth and falsehood in criticism,*” and leave “*the whole text of the New-Testament unsubstantiated and dubious.*” In my humble opinion, there is an important *rule* in determining the divinity of a given text, which seems to have been overlooked by Griesbach, and, perhaps, by many others; namely, its *internal character*, and *agreement* with the other parts and doctrines of the Scriptures. According to *this* rule, the text in debate stands firm. The *internal* evidence of the Bible at large, has been considered by divines of the *first* eminence, as a proof of its authenticity; and

why a rule which is applied to the whole, with supposed success, should be inapplicable to a part, and not sufficient to support its authority, is to me, mysterious.

There is one thing in the quotation from Griesbach, that is rather enigmatical. It is this,—“ And I would undertake, if it were worth while, to defend six hundred *notoriously spurious* and *universally rejected readings* by testimonies and arguments, far more numerous and powerful, than any which are used by the patrons of this verse.”

Does this saying, look like a man, who feels a tender regard for the honor of God's word? like a holy fear of unhinging the minds of people in respect to that invaluable Book, which was given “to make them wise unto salvation.” Let him be ever so highly honored by the learned world, I think his statement is sanguine and alarming. It sounds like infidelity, rather than a humble faith in the Oracles of God. If there be “six hundred *notoriously spurious* and *universally rejected readings*” in our translation, it must be a very uncertain guide to the common reader; and, to proclaim such a thing in the ears of those, who hate the Scriptures, and wish to deny their authority, appears to be a rash and unguarded step. Even allowing Griesbach to be a Christian and a Trinitarian, this assertion cannot fail in having its effect, in enlarging the ranks of unbelievers.

But as this celebrated critic announces, that these “six hundred *spurious readings*” may be defended “by more numerous and powerful arguments” than 1 John, 5. 7, I am inclined to think that they are entitled to our confidence.

It seems, however, to have been Griesbach's object, to deter every one from venturing any more to support the text in debate, by saying: The “acute Kittelius, the sagacious Hazellius, and the zealous Travis,” have labored

in this desperate case, "angrily and in vain." But if they have failed in supporting the cause of that passage, they have shown much regard to an important gospel doctrine ; and, therefore, they might have expected more lenity from this Biblical critic, if he is a Trinitarian, than to say that they have been "severely castigated by Porson and Marsh, and labored angrily and in vain."

No doubt, Griesbach is a scholar, an able critic, and has some claim to respect ; but I think his orthodoxy is questionable.* There is no need, however, of denying learning and merit to any gentleman, because he differs from us in theological opinion. Men of small parts and learning may have correct views of divine subjects, while men of extensive learning and capacity may adopt the wildest theories in relation to these things. But, Anti-

* The authority of Griesbach is not universally submitted to, by the learned in Europe. *Richard Lawrence, L. L. D.* Rector of Mersham, England, published a pamphlet in 1814, which was reviewed in the *Christian Observer*, vol. 13. page 573, in which he makes some objections against Griesbach's method of deciding on the authenticity of the various readings, of different manuscripts, and makes some statements which are calculated very much to shake our confidence in any of Griesbach's decisions. He states, that Griesbach admits that there were five or six classes of manuscripts, but confined himself to the examination of three classes only ; that he adopted a mode of deciding on the classification of manuscripts, which was merely arbitrary and which yet had an important influence in forming his ultimate decisions. He declares that very material inaccuracies were committed by Griesbach in his enumeration of the various readings, and points out some instances, of decisions directly contrary to his own rules. The result of Dr. Lawrence's examination, appeared to be a full conviction in his mind that no reliance was to be placed in Griesbach's authority, and that his classification of manuscripts, by which his decisions were supported, was *principally made to subserve the purpose of critical conjecture*. Thus much for the undisputed authority of Griesbach. One word as to his orthodoxy. He indeed professes to believe in the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. But while he makes this profession, one of the rules by which he decides on the various readings is singular enough. It is in these words ; "Amongst various readings that which beyond the rest manifestly favors the tenets of the orthodox is *deservedly suspected*." (The above note was communicated to the author by a learned friend.)

Trinitarians seem to think that our incorrectness in doctrine must originate from a want of talents ; and, therefore, they are constantly holding up the idea of Trinitarian weakness. We have no need of denying these endowments to them, to account for their deficiency in the knowledge of divine truth ; for we believe it to be of a moral nature. It is said by Jesus Christ, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of his doctrine whether it be of God." His apostle says likewise, "The world by wisdom knew not God." "Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." The doctrines of the cross were, to the learned Greeks, foolishness. We must, therefore, "become *fools*" in the view of learned sinners, to be made wise unto salvation."

The gentleman, after giving us an account of Griesbach's rejecting the text in debate from his purified Greek Testament, and his remarks on its spuriousness ; proceeds to give his opinion of Mr. Travis, from whose works, part of the historical evidence in favor of its authority has been taken.

He says, "Of this Travis, who is so puffed off here in America, by those, who know nothing of the man, and who are totally unacquainted with the state of this controversy, the celebrated professor Michaelis justly observes ; he is indisputably *half a century behind hand in critical knowledge*, and consequently, unacquainted with matter now universally known."

I would just remark, that whenever my opponent has occasion to speak of Mr. Travis, he invariably uses the language of indignity and contempt. In the outset of his discourse, he has once condescended to call him Mr. Travis ; but, after his mind became warmed with argument, no terms of tenderness or gentility are any more admitted. The very next time he speaks of him, it is in

a highly degrading manner:—saying, “notwithstanding the pretence of Travis, and Martyn the Frenchman, from whom this same Travis has copied, without giving credit for it.” We see, my hearers, that the *original* is treated with as little ceremony as the copyist. The Americans, who are said to “puff off” this feeble writer, are mentioned in a way not very flattering to their feelings. They are represented as not knowing how inferior Mr. Travis is, and of being entirely ignorant of the true grounds of the controversy respecting the text in question. He contemptuously calls them, “enthusiastic devotees,” and speaks of their mocking at the invincible arguments adduced against an “evident interpolation,” on which, “the *mene tekeli* of God and man is inscribed; and which is, in a little time, to be “blotted out of the book of life, and consigned to the abodes of annihilation.”

To these reveries of the gentleman, I shall not reply. They are not of the most conciliating kind; but divine rule forbids us to “render evil for evil.”

When my opponent, however, has occasion to speak of the writers who stand opposed to the text, he gives incontestible proof of his knowledge of refinement. Then he can say—“The pre-eminently learned, and Trinitarian Michaelis—the most learned orientalist that Europe ever produced—the most deeply versed in Biblical criticism—and one of the wisest and worthiest of men.” Such pleasing adjectives, also, as “*celebrated, famous, learned,* and *highly respectable*, are applied by my opponent to Griesbach, Porson and Marsh. It is, no doubt, to shake our confidence in the knowledge and veracity of the Rev. George Travis, that he is mentioned by the gentleman in such a degrading manner. As this appears to be the case, it becomes necessary for me to make some observations in regard to his standing.

We have no right to view him as being deficient, either in learning, or uprightness. If my opponent had allowed these endowments to any other writers in opposition to his scheme, we should have more reason to repose confidence in his opinion of Mr. Travis. As this is not the case, we may believe, that he is, on such accounts, as respectable as any other Trinitarian authors. With respect to Mr. Travis, a learned divine says, in his defence of 1 John, 5. 7. "For these testimonies, we are indebted to the judicious and learned works of the Rev. George Travis, A. M. Prebendary of Chester, and Vicar of Eastham, who in his letters to Edward Gibbon, Esq. has rescued this text from the hands of its adversaries, and conferred on the church an obligation of the liveliest gratitude and love."

Mr. Travis, it seems, was an Episcopalian divine, of some eminence, and possessed the degree of A. M. in the department of learning. As he undertook a defence of the text in question, it is a proof of his soundness as to the doctrine of the Trinity; and, we may think, no inconsiderable evidence of his piety. In appearing as an author, he made himself responsible to the world for the truth of his statements. This was a powerful motive to deter him from the most distant approach to falsehood; and, therefore, we may conclude, that he has not tarnished his character by taking such a wicked and dangerous stand.

It is a vain attempt in my opponent, to think of invalidating the historical testimony of Mr. Travis, in favor of the text; for the Rev. W. Jones and Dr. Gill, have, in substance, given the *same* historical account. The Rev. James Sloss preached eighteen sermons on this text, in Nottingham, England, in 1736, and he gives the very *same* historical account of its authenticity, that is given

by Mr. Travis. He first cites Tertullian, who lived in the beginning of the second century. The very words of that ancient father, M. Sloss says, are these:

“The connection of the Father *in* the Son, and of the Son *in* the Comforter, makes three joining together, the one of which is from the other, *which Three are One Thing.*” Tertull. Contra Prax. Chap. 25. This, my author says, “is an exact translation of the latter clause of” the verse in dispute. He says, that “Cyprian, who lived in the next century, cites this text; saying, “And again it is written, of the Father, Son, and Spirit, *These Three are One.*” Cyp. de uni. Eccl. cap. 4. ad finem.

This quotation from Cyprian, is evidently the last clause of 1 John, 5. 7. But it is needless to swell my pages with the evidence that follows, for it ~~is~~ in exact accordance with the historical testimony of Mr. Travis. In one word, all who have written in defence of the text, have given the *same* historical account of its authenticity; it is needless, therefore, for my opponent to think to carry his point, by sinking the respectability of Mr. Travis as an author.

But the gentleman says—“To conclude—so fully abandoned is this passage in England, by Trinitarians, that in the London Evangelical Magazine, published in the latter part of the last century, and continued in this, and read by the people very generally, I have seen the severe strictures of Professor Michaelis upon this passage quoted with approbation.”

In regard to the British Trinitarians having given up the text under consideration, sufficient has been said already.

I cannot say what the London Evangelical Magazine contains, in reference to this passage, being wholly unacquainted with that publication. But there is no doubt in

in my mind, that there are many things published in England under specious names, whose complexion is Anti-Trinitarian. It is well understood that gentlemen of that school, in England, are struggling for victory, with a zeal that would confer honor on a better cause.

The gentleman closes his elaborate discourse, with the following *tremendous* sentence; namely—"If any man, after being made acquainted with these various facts, now presented to him, *is so devoid of candor, of modesty, of the sense of shame, and the love of truth*, as to rely upon this *notoriously spurious passage*, in proof of a *three-fold God*, I feel compelled to adopt the language of the Almighty, and say, "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone."

I shall only say, in reply to this extraordinary effort of my opponent's talent and spirit, that it may be considered as *some* apology for the severities of which I may be deemed guilty, in the course of my strictures on his performance. But, after all that he has said, I *remain* in the belief, that the text in debate is of divine authority.

If I be, however, "*devoid of candor, of modesty, of the sense of shame and the love of truth*," the crime is great; but, I am not yet convinced of any guilt in this matter. I am not willing to be frightened out of my opinion, by the mere force of unsupported expressions. The gentleman's eloquence far exceeds, in my view, the power of his arguments.

These things, however, must be submitted to the candid judgment of the christian world, as far as they may fall under their review.

There is one circumstance, however, which prevents me from closing my reply, with what *has* been said, to my accomplished opponent. In the fourth sermon, some notice was taken of the *faith* of the Syrian christians, in relation to the doctrine of the Trinity; which led him to

complain, that I had omitted one thing that *ought* to have been mentioned ; namely, the *situation* of the manuscripts, which Dr. Buchanan found in their possession, respecting the text in dispute. For this omission my apology is ; I had not the Researches of that worthy minister of Christ before me, when I mentioned the belief of the Syrian christians, in the doctrine of the Trinity. What I then said, was taken from an extract.

When my sermon was written, I did not feel myself capable of doing justice to that part of the subject, from the mere strength of memory. I had expressly acknowledged, that the text in dispute was wanting in many versions and manuscripts of the Scriptures ; and that was all which I supposed to be incumbent on me. My opponent has wholly overlooked the argument himself, in his written discourse. But, as he has now mentioned the thing, a reply becomes necessary ; and, at present, the Researches are before me.

It is true, that Dr. Buchanan acknowledges that 1 John, 5. 7, is not in *any* manuscript or copy of the Scriptures, which he examined among the insulated christians of Syria. But the Dr. says, their Bishop did not claim an antiquity for the oldest of them, above one thousand years ; which does not carry them above the 9th century. It is highly probable, that those Eastern christians were furnished with their Scriptures in the time of the Arian controversy ; and, therefore, no *new* argument arises from that quarter, in opposition to the text in view.

According to the account which they gave to the Dr. they received their version of the Scriptures in the fourth century. They had evidently *some* connection with the rest of the christian world, during the Arian contest ; for, the name of one of their Bishops is found on the doings of the Nicene council. After the Dr's. statement, that the

text in debate is *not* in any copy of the Syrian Scriptures which he had seen ; he expressly says :

“ But notwithstanding this omission, and notwithstanding the great display of learning in maintaining a contrary opinion, I believe the passage to be genuine.” We see, therefore, that *one* European Trinitarian divine of the *first* eminence, and who, to use the words of my opponent, “ has lived with ourselves in the same enlightened age,” has *not* abandoned the text in question. The reasons which induced him to be of this opinion, must, undoubtedly, have an equal *weight* with many Trinitarians in England, and on the European continent.

It is highly probable, that the *same* reasons induced Dr. Buchannan to believe in the authority of the text at issue, on which my own mind rests. There is no other way, that I can see, in which he could account for the want of it in the Syrian Scriptures. But the opinion of that learned and justly celebrated divine, *must* have great weight on candid minds. The character he sustained—the abilities he possessed—the time in which he lived—and the advantage he was under to know the true merits of this controversy ; set him on high ground, to judge with accuracy in the case.

I shall now close my reply to the gentleman in opposition, without changing my mind as to the authority of the text in dispute. It is my design, in the next sermon, to sum up the evidence on each side of the grand question ; carefully to weigh it ; and then, make some reflections on the subject. AMEN.

SERMON IX.



I JOHN, V, 7.

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost : and these three are one.



IN the view of my sermons on this passage, and the contest with my opponent on its authenticity ; I shall now proceed in summing up the evidence on each side of the question, and then make some reflections.

The testimonies, *for* and *against* the text in debate, have been sufficiently illustrated. It only remains, to select the main things on which a reliance may be placed ; and to form an impartial decision in relation to its spuriousness or authenticity.

Here, the seat of the disinterested and unbiassed judge should be taken, instead of the stand of the warm advocate, or the zealous feelings of the partizan of a particular system. Candor and close attention are very necessary, to form a correct judgment in a case of this nature. But, to take this elevated stand, which is so beautiful in theory, so proper in itself, and so expressive of a noble and generous mind, is not very easy for beings, who possess the feelings of fallen men. We can very easily see the want of

candor in an opponent ; but, to discern it in ourselves, is more difficult.

Prejudices which are deeply rooted and of long standing, are very powerful, and not easily removed. We are apt to view our honor and interest, as inseparably connected with the stand that we take in relation to religious sentiments.

It is not an easy thing, therefore, to change our opinion on subjects of this nature ; and, more especially, when that opinion is in favor of a doctrine which is congenial with the depraved feelings of the heart. We, who profess to be Orthodox, may find some difficulty in divesting ourselves of biasses, which are unfavorable to correct judging, in respect to the subject in view ; and, if our opponents think, that they are wholly unbiassed, and prepared to judge according to truth in this matter ; the judgment day, perhaps, may convince them of their mistake.

As the text in question relates to an infinitely interesting doctrine, it is not to be expected that people of opposite principles will feel very disinterested, in forming their conclusions *for* or *against* its authenticity. Under these impressions, we may now proceed to take a summary view of the evidence on each side of this momentous and contested subject. In doing this, it will be proper,

I. To state the testimony which lies *against* the passage in dispute. No notice, however, will be taken of what my opponent has urged against its *internal* character ; for, no candid mind can deem it to have any weight. But, that there is *external* evidence against it, is a thing, that I have not denied. In giving a condensed account of that, on which reliance may be placed, it may be observed,

1. It is not an evidence in its favor, that there is not *more* account of it in the writings of the early fathers, against the Anti-Trinitarians. We have seen, however,

that it has been quoted by *some* writers of every century, up to the apostolic age; but if that kind of testimony were *more* abundant, the evidence that it was actually in the autograph of St. John, would be greater. How far the reasons which have been given for this deficiency ought to have weight, it is your province to decide. They were these,—That, but few writings, so ancient, have come down to us; and such as have, may have been greatly altered, through the want of care, in transcribing; or with the design of involving the text in suspicion, in the view of succeeding generations. But let the cause of this deficiency be what it may, it is an argument which will be urged, by some, against the authority of the passage.

2. The want of this text in so many versions of the Scriptures, is an unfavorable circumstance. No *candid* advocate for its authority will deny this, whose mind is well informed. The gentleman in opposition has stated, that there are seven versions, in which the text is not found; namely: the two Syriac versions; the Schidie and Coptic versions; and the Ethiopic, Arabic and Sclavonic versions. Dr. Buchannan says also, that it is not to be found in any manuscript, or copy of the Scriptures which he had seen, among those Christians that he discovered, in the interior of Asia. This, we must acknowledge, is unfavorable. These considerations, with the manner in which they have been accounted for, should be very carefully weighed. To say these things form *no* ground to doubt of the authenticity of this text, would be an evidence of imbecility and prejudice. They *have* caused some of the Orthodox to hesitate, and all its enemies to oppose it with great apparent confidence. An entire disregard to these unfavorable things, is inconsistent with impartiality in judging.

3. The want of this text in the *Greek* manuscripts, is *far from* being in its favor. My opponent says, that “one

hundred and thirty two *Greek* Manuscripts have been examined by the learned," in the various ages of Christianity, "with a particular reference to" the text in debate, "and have *all* been found silent," in respect to it. This is something unfavorable to its authority. He says likewise, that there are one hundred and nine *such* manuscripts now in being, testifying against its authenticity. These things constitute the main objections, against the passage in controversy. But, if they did not exist, no defence of it would be necessary; for its authority would stand on as high ground as any other text in the Bible. The argument, that the passage is now given up by all the learned in Europe, is not conclusive, even if it were true; for that would only show *their* opinion on the subject, which *may* be erroneous. Opinions sometimes prevail extensively, from the *mere* circumstance that they have been introduced by men, whose fame is great in the world. It is, however, an unsupported assertion. I never have seen a *real* Trinitarian, who would avow himself to be an entire unbeliever in the genuineness of the text.

II. We may now proceed to sum up the evidence in *favor* of the text in question; and in doing it we may speak,

1. Of its *internal* character. It has been clearly shown that the passage in *this* respect stands fair, and above the reach of its adversaries. I have never seen it attacked on this ground by any Anti-Trinitarian, before my opponent.

When Mr. Emlyn addressed his petition to both houses of convocation in England, in 1715, he did not object to the passage on the *internal*, but on the *external* evidence of its spuriousness. As to *internal* character, it may justly be said, that it is merely a summary declaration of what is contained in many other express passages of the divine word.

The truth of this has been very fully maintained in the prosecution of the subject in hand. In one of the preceding sermons, it *was* made evident that, "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," have testified *in* and *from* heaven; and that *each is supremely divine*, and yet but *one God*, is a doctrine accompanied with such evidence, that a denial of it is an entire departure from the very foundation on which the church is built. We must be more than distracted, therefore, to doubt of the authenticity of the text, on the ground of its *internal* character.

No Trinitarian can consistently take such a stand. On the internal purity of the passage, we may surely repose the highest confidence. We must be convinced that *three persons in one God*, is not a sound and Scriptural doctrine, before our minds *can* be shaken by such arguments as my opponent has advanced in opposition to the internal character of the text in dispute.

This consideration, however, is not an incontestible proof that it is an insertion; for an interpolation *may* be a correct statement of a divine doctrine. Although the passage, as Dr. Doddridge says, "*contains an important truth*," its inspiration ought to be renounced. If it could be proved that it was not written by St. John. Unless *that* can be done, we may justly esteem it as a part of the Holy Scriptures.

2. We may now go on to sum up the *external* evidence which has been adduced in *favor* of the text under consideration.

If the historical testimony, which has been exhibited in the foregoing discourses, is correct, there is no just reason for renouncing its authenticity. But the gentleman on the other side, has endeavored to shake that in an indirect manner. The information and integrity of Mr. Travis, however, may be believed, until the opposite of these

things is fairly substantiated. That he was a gentleman of sound sense and classical education, very fully appears from the perspicuity, force and elegance of his writings. It is said by a very learned writer, that he has had "access to the most faithful, and the most credible documents," and "given the most enlightened answers to the objections of those writers who have distinguished themselves most against this contested text." His situation in life placed him above suspicion, as to his integrity. To attack an opponent, in the way that the gentleman in opposition has Mr. Travis, betrays the weakness of his cause. We have no reason to believe the historical testimony, on which we rely in this case, was ever fabricated by Mr. Travis, nor by him from whom he is said to have copied. The attempt of my opponent, to destroy the historical evidence which has been produced by me, is vain. An effort to prove its *insufficiency*, would be far more ingenuous and convincing. This method of destroying testimony, may be resorted to on both sides of the question ; and then all certainty concerning any historical statements, would be at once unsettled.

After these general remarks, we may proceed to state the main things in the historical evidence in *favor* of the text, on which a reliance may be placed. And in doing this,

1. Mention will be made of the quotations of the passage by the early fathers of the church. My opponent has stated, that the text in view was never quoted earlier than the eighth century. The Rev. T. Lindsey, however, has acknowledged, that it *was* cited in the fifth century ; and he certainly is one to whom all the other Anti-Trinitarians are willing to look up to as their file leader. He says,—“The person who first cited this suspected verse, as being really written by the apostle John, was

Vigillius Tapsensis, a bishop who lived about the end of the fifth century." This acknowledgment being *against* the cause in which Mr. Lindsey was enlisted, it is justly entitled to our highest confidence. This recent and learned Anti-Trinitarian does not mention this matter, as a thing of which he entertained *any* doubt; for his expressions are absolute. This concession, however, is almost a fatal blow to his own interest, as it respects the text in debate; for if it *was* quoted by Vigillius at the close of the fifth century, it must have been in the Sacred Manuscripts then, and believed by the church to be an inspired text, long before that time; or a citation of it must have exposed him to detection and contempt. The citation of this debated passage must be found in some of his writings; and, if he had an authority for this which was then deemed good, the text must be carried back, near or quite to the apostolic age. As the majority of Christendom at that time must have been Arians, and many of them learned men, Vigillius would have been exposed to shame in citing the text, unless he had an authority for it which was indisputable. ~~Common sense~~ *must* say, that Mr. Lindsey's concession is one of the worst blows to the opposers of the passage, that could be well given. It clears the Church of Rome entirely from my opponent's charge of forging the passage.

It is insinuated however, by Mr. Lindsey, that Vigillius forged it himself; saying, that he is "the same person, who, most probably, forged the creed, which goes about under the name of Athanasius." This retreat is the best that he *could* make from the position he had taken. Mr. Lindsey, however, has contradicted my opponent, by placing the first use of the text, three hundred years beyond *his* statement, which was made in unqualified terms. Seeing that men of the same school disagree with each

other, we may be justified in thinking, that other writers may be right in differing from them all. In the historical testimony which I have adduced in defence of the text, Vigilius was mentioned; and it is supported, we see, by high Anti-Trinitarian authority. We may venture to believe, therefore, that it was quoted also by Jerom, in the beginning of the fifth century—by Agustine in the fourth—by his cotemporaries, Marcus Celedensis and Phebadius—by Cyprian and Tertullian in the third—and by Clemens, in the second century. We may rely on this evidence, until it can be removed by solid proof.

2. The ancient versions in which the text appears, testify in its *favor*. These are, the Italic, which was made in the first century—the Armenian version, which history says was made very early, and from *Greek* manuscripts—the Vulgate, or *Latin* version, in which my opponent himself acknowledges, the text appears. In regard to the Syrian version, it is admitted by Mr. Lindsey, to be in some of its printed editions. That is a very great concession for him to make.

3. The *Greek* manuscripts in which the text *has* appeared, are highly in its *favor*. Notwithstanding their not existing at present, we have authentic documents of their having been examined, and found containing the text in question. It has been shewn, that Laurentius Valla obtained seven *Greek* manuscripts, in the fourteenth century; and we have his testimony, that the text was in them *all*. Robert Stephens found it in *nine* of his *sixteen* *Greek* manuscripts. Jerom formed his Testament in the fourth century, from *Greek* manuscripts. Walafrid Strabo, formed his Glossa Ordinaria in the ninth century, from *Greek* manuscripts. In making the Armenian version, they had *Greek* manuscripts; and so had the divines, who made what is called the Correctorium in the eighth century.

Thus we have a correct historical account of *Greek* manuscripts, from the fourth, down to the fifteenth century. These various accounts of Greek manuscripts, containing the text, through the duration of a thousand years, shews that the number of them must have been very considerable. Although they have perished with time, we have an evidence of their examination, that is as great as many other historical facts, on whose truth we fully rely.

As the substance of the evidence *for* and *against* the text in debate, has now been concisely stated; we may proceed to the intended reflections on the subject. And,

1. It must be admitted, that the passage in controversy is, in some degree, involved in difficulty. Not having been more frequently quoted by the ancient fathers—not appearing in a number of the ancient versions—not being found in the existing *Greek* manuscripts, is the sum of the evidence that lies *against* it. Its having been quoted by *some* of the fathers, from the fifth up to the second century—appearing in several of the early versions of the scriptures—the historical account we have of its existing in many *Greek* manuscripts which have been examined, but lost with time; with the *purity of its internal character*, are the testimonies which we have in its *favor*. These are the grounds on which we must judge of its spuriousness or authenticity. Thus, the substance of the evidence *for* and *against* it, is placed in a concise and clear light. It must be admitted that the passage is either spurious or genuine. If it be an inspired text, its adversaries must have, by some means, banished it from many of the versions and manuscripts of the Scriptures; and, if it is a spurious passage, the Orthodox must have forged it, antecedent to the close of the fifth century. But how either of these things could have been done, without plain evidence of the fact, is truly mysterious. There is no hint,

of this kind, given by any writer, that I know of, but Jerom. He was a pre-eminent character in the Orthodox Church, in the fourth century. He says, "that he found out how it had been *adulterated, mistranslated and omitted, on purpose* to elude the truth." But we know of no *ancient* charge against the Orthodox, as having forged the text in question. This has been alledged *since* the fifteenth century. If, however, the text be a forgery, the crime must have been committed about the beginning of the Arian period; and, therefore, it is surprising that *they* should be so silent in respect to the thing; leaving it to be announced by the modern Anti-Trinitarians. But there are three considerations about this case, which claim a serious attention:—The *first* is, Which was the most easy thing, to forge and insert, or to erase and omit? The *second* is—Which of those contending parties, had the greatest need of doing the one or the other of these crimes? The *third* is—Which of those parties possessed a character, that would lead to the greatest suspicion?

The proper answer to these solemn questions is left to the hearer. There must have been iniquity committed in relation to the text, either in the fourth or the fifth century; for to make it a matter of more modern date, is an idle attempt, as the Rev Mr. Lindsey's concession fully proves.

2. From a careful view of the *grounds* of this controversy, my mind is greatly convinced, that the text under consideration is genuine. But it is so much involved in suspicion, that those who do not believe in Trinitarian doctrine, will repel its force on that ground, whenever it is used *against* them. For this reason, the Rev. R. Wardlaw, and some others, have not availed themselves of its assistance, in defence of the Trinity, and the Deity of Christ. In this matter, however, I must think, with the Rev. Mr. Bell of Glasgow, Scotland, that *they* have "con-

ceded too far to the common enemy." As it is retained in all the modern translations and editions of the Bible, it may be quoted with propriety, whether the Anti-Trinitarians "will hear or forbear." I shall draw this subject to a close, with a greatly increased conviction of its divine authority. But the effect of my investigation on the minds of others, time must determine.

3. I have not contended for this passage, on the ground that the doctrine of the Trinity in Unity, and the Deity of Christ, cannot be maintained without its aid. The text has been defended by me, from a solemn conviction that the Orthodox owe it this service, as bearing such visible marks of being the *real* word of God. Mr. Wardlaw has fully substantiated the truths which have been mentioned, without the help of this passage. If all the false readings which are charged on our translation, and the forced constructions of the Anti-Trinitarians on the received text, should be admitted, the Trinitarian doctrines would then be fully supported. There is no getting rid of them, without removing the Scriptures altogether. Our opponents have been so powerfully convinced of this themselves, that they have been forced to deny the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures; and to charge the prophets and apostles, with "lame accounts, and inconclusive reasonings."

4. As this is the *ninth* discourse on the text, it is unnecessary to proceed any farther. If my opponent makes any reply, I shall not answer, unless the cause of truth requires it. It is not my wish to excite unpleasant feelings in his mind, unnecessarily. I have no personal hardness against the gentleman; and I do not complain of his treatment of me: it has been polite and affectionate in many respects. He has taken a deep interest in the subject; and my own feelings, I readily acknowledge, have

been strongly enlisted in the cause. I shall close the dispute, for the present, with freely overlooking some of his strong expressions, as things, prompted by the heat of argument, and not as being expressive of any disrespect to me. I sincerely wish him every necessary blessing in time and eternity. It is my ardent prayer, that the subject which we have contested, may be profitable to us and to our hearers.

In respect to learning and strength of argument, the gentleman stands on elevated ground. I have not supposed that I have been contending with a weak opponent. Any of my expressions, that may seem to border on severity, the apology which I have made for him, I offer for myself.

If I have not understood my opponent, or have misrepresented his arguments, I stand ready to be corrected; but as for the conclusiveness of my reasoning, it must be left to the judgment of the impartial examiner. I sincerely hope, that the gentleman will reconsider the sentiments which he has been defending; and follow the example of the celebrated Dr. Scott in relinquishing them. If ever he should be so happy as to take that ground, his views of the text in question, will probably become the same as his.

Let the subject induce you all, my hearers, to read and think, and be the means of your improvement in Christian knowledge. On the next occasion, it is my design to deliver a sermon from Rev. 2. 8, giving it a bearing on the subject that has now been handled.

May the blessing of "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost;" "the three heavenly witnesses," mysteriously *united in one essence*, lead this assembly into the knowledge of God's glory, and a participation of eternal salvation, on the ground of the atonement, and the Spirit's operation. AMEN.

SERMON X.

REV. II. 8.

These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive.

ON the last occasion, a promise was made of entering into an investigation of these words. It is now designed to give them a *bearing* on the subject to which your attention has been so particularly called. It was the vindication of a text contained in all the modern translations and editions of the Bible, whose authenticity has been called in question by the Anti-Trinitarians, for the space of three hundred years. Every objection which ingenuity could invent, or industry spread, has been set against it in battle array.

The circumstance of its being left out of Griesbach's Testament, is triumphantly proclaimed as a conclusive testimony against its divine authority. Seeing that Biblical critic is gloried in as an authority, almost in all cases militating against us; I may now address our opponents in the same manner that Festus did St. Paul; namely, "Have you appealed unto Griesbach? Unto Griesbach shall you go." The text which is selected as the theme of this discourse, stands in his corrected Testament, just as it appears in our translation. No manuscript—no version—no circumstance whatever, can be consistently urged

against its divine authority. We have the highest evidence that it stood in the autograph of St. John, just as it appears in the English translation of the New-Testament. No enemy dares lift his voice against it, who is willing to admit that any part of the Scriptures is the fruit of divine inspiration. The passage, therefore, is a powerful witness of the doctrine which it contains.

It was spoken by Jesus Christ; and it is a just description of his glorious Person. When he appeared to St. John on the isle of Patmos, he said to him, "Unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead and is alive."

The things which are mentioned in this verse, can apply to no other being but Him, who is emphatically "the Son of God," and "the Son of man." There is no other who was dead and is now alive, who can be called "the First and the Last."

Enoch and Elijah are now alive in the highest sense of the word; but they were never dead. The saints who arose at the time of Christ's resurrection, are also alive; but, it cannot be said of any one of them, that he is "the first and the last." Some have been raised from the dead by the prophets, by Jesus Christ and by the apostles; but, they all died again; and, therefore, it cannot be said now, that any one of them is alive in body and soul. The declaration made in our text, applies only to Emanuel, who is "God with us." "The first and the last" are titles, applying to no other being but the infinite and eternal God. It is in this high sense that Jesus speaks of himself in the text; for he is not comparing himself with any created being.

The passage is paraphrased by Dr. Doddridge thus;—
"These things saith" "that glorious and divine Person who having assumed the human nature into a union with

Deity, is able to say, he was dead and is alive; who, therefore, demands by all considerations of reverence, gratitude, and love, thy most attentive audience, and most obedient regard."

The same glories, which this text mentions, are given to Christ in Rev. 1. 8, and also in the 11th verse; but, as the *first* passage is applied by our opponents to the Father, and the *second* is not in the Greek manuscripts, and is given up by Griesbach as a spurious reading; I have chosen the eighth verse of the second chapter for my text at this time; because no objections can be made to its authenticity. It is as full in its testimony to our Lord's supreme Deity, as the other passages that I have passed by; or as any text in the New-Testament can possibly be. The words before us shall now be considered as a solemn declaration of the Supreme Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. After this proposition shall have been proved and illustrated, the text will be applied to the passages whose authenticity is contested by our adversaries.

I. It is to be shewn, that the text in view is an express and solemn declaration of the Supreme Deity of Christ. No other sense can be consistently given to these expressions—"The first and the last." If Jesus Christ be the *first*, then we may rest assured, that there was no other being before Him: and if He be the *last*, no other being can succeed Him, or live when He is no more. It may be truly said of Him, as it is of the Almighty—"Thou art from everlasting, to everlasting: and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." Saying that Christ is "the *first* and the *last*," is roundly asserting the proper eternity of His existence. The Almighty speaks repeatedly of himself in the same manner. He saith—"Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last." Isa. 47. 12. "I am

the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God." Chap. 44. 6. No prophet—no apostle—no *mere* creature except Christ, if he be one, ever said, "I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Rev. 1. 18. This is a similar declaration to the one contained in our text; being only a little more amplified. Should any created being express himself in our hearing in such a manner, we certainly should be as greatly shocked as the Jews were, when Jesus said in *their* hearing—"I and my Father *are one*."

Rev. 1. 17, 18, is a little varied by Griesbach in phraseology and punctuation; but its sense is completely retained. As the passage has an important relation to the subject in hand, it will now be stated as it appears in his Greek Testament. He makes it read thus—"I am the first and the last, and the living one: and I was dead; and behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Allowing this to be the most correct reading of the text, it is as fully in our favor as the English translation. It is on these words—"The first and the last," that my reliance is placed; and they are completely retained by Griesbach, with such expressions, as sufficiently show that they are spoken of Jesus Christ. "The first and the last," denote a proper eternity, and involve the idea of self existence and independence, which things cannot be said of any other being, but the Supreme God. There is not a circumstance in the text, which is the theme of this discourse, nor in the parallel one that has been quoted, that goes to show, that we may understand the expressions—"The *first* and the *last*," with any limitation, or in any sense different from Isa. 44. 6, and 48. 12. In Rev. 22. 13, Christ repeats the eternity of his own existence three times; saying, "I am Alpha

and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." The authenticity of this passage is not called in question; neither can its application to the Son of God be very easily denied. The same Being saith in the preceding verse—"Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his works shall be." We know that it is Christ, who shall descend from heaven and judge angels and men. This might be proved from many direct testimonies. It is impossible that such expressions should be *so* repeatedly applied to Jesus Christ, unless he is like his Father, "from everlasting to everlasting."

The proper Divinity of the Redeemer, might be proved from many other testimonies; but as the text leads us only to this, no other arguments, at present, will be urged. This as completely settles the point in view, as an exhibition of all the evidence which arises from other considerations. God only is the "*first*" of all beings; and, if Christ be the "*first*," then He is *truly* God. The eternity of his being, and consequently, Deity, have been amply supported from our text, and the parallel passages which have been mentioned.

To show, however, that the proper Divinity of Christ is not confined to the book of Revelation, some other ~~sacred~~ passages will be added, which are corroborative of the same glorious doctrine. Long before He appeared in the flesh, a prophetic voice proclaimed,—“Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” Isa. 9. 6. No candid mind can have any doubt, but that Christ is the one, who is meant in this sublime passage. The thing is irresistibly evident. In connection with the other things which are

said of Christ in this passage, the eternity of his being is expressly announced, by calling him—"The *everlasting* Father." It is also said of Him by another prophet—"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from *everlasting*." Mic. 5. 2. Coming out of Bethlehem, and ruling in Israel, clearly show, that the sacred writer is speaking of Christ; and his eternity is declared in these words, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from *everlasting*." Nothing more is necessary to convince the mind that this passage is in point, in relation to the present subject.

But, a few passages will be selected from the New-Testament, as a farther establishment and illustration of the doctrine under consideration. It is said by an apostle—"But unto the Son, he saith—Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." Heb. 1. 8. It is necessary to apprise you, however, my hearers, how the modern Anti-Trinitarians render this text, to silence its voice against their system. They give it this reading—"God is thy throne for ever and ever." In respect to this, Dr. Doddridge says, "To render this as some do, 'God is thy throne forever and ever;' that is, God will establish thy throne, appears to me very unnatural." But Dr. Carpenter, who is a leading Anti-Trinitarian in England, has given up this rendering, as being inconsistent with the Greek idiom. Whether the other writers of that school will have the temerity to advocate it still, time must determine. We may rest satisfied, however, that *our* translation is correct in this case; and that the passage fully establishes the eternal Deity of Jesus Christ. Wetstein, who is also an An-Trinitarian, freely acknowledges that "the sacred writer *has* called

Christ, in this passage, by the name of God." No doubt he has done it with strict propriety. The text under consideration, expressly proves the *eternity* of Christ's existence ; and that is the simple point to which it is now applied. In relation to the proposition we are establishing, these words apply—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." Heb. 13. 8. If this language were used in respect to the acknowledged God, nobody would hesitate about the propriety of the application ; nor doubt, that the words denoted a proper eternity. We may therefore consider them as being a cogent proof that Jesus Christ *is* "the *first* and the *last*." It must also be allowed that Melchizedek is either Christ himself, or an eminent type of his Person and character ; and it is expressly said of him, that he "is King of peace ; without Father, and without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life ; but made like unto the Son of God ; abideth a Priest continually." Heb. 7. 2, 3. On the evidence which has been adduced, we may rest assured, that Christ is from eternity ; and of course, the Supreme JEHOVAH—the God of the universe.

II. The text, as thus explained, is now to be applied to the passages which are contested by our theological adversaries. In doing this, let it be observed,

1. If Christ is "the *first* and the *last*—was dead and *is* alive ;" then we may infer, that his divine and human nature form one identical person. It is as God, that He is "the *first* and the *last* ;" and it is as man, that He "was dead and *is*" now "alive." These things are all predicated of one and the same person.

The mystery of the hypostatical union, as it is called by divines, is established by our subject beyond contradiction. Our incapacity of explaining it, is no proper reason why we should refuse to receive it as an article of our faith.

To take such an imperious stand, is wicked, and leads to broad infidelity. It is the very same thing as to fall on the stumbling stone. It is said of such people, that they "shall be broken;" and that, if this stone "fall" upon them, "it will grind them to powder." It is sufficient for us to know, that God saith the thing is so, without our arrogantly calling upon him to explain to our feeble understanding the *mode* of it. To be wise above what is written, is nothing short of opposition to God. The union of the divine and human nature in the person of Christ, is a sublime mystery, into which the very angels desire to look, and which eternity will never fully unfold. It is a bright display of God's glory—the only foundation of safety to penitent sinners; and a subject that demands eternal praise from men.

2. If Christ is "the *first* and the *last*—was dead and is now alive, then we may infer, that he is a distinct Person from the Father, and yet one with him in essence, perfections and glory. It is never said of the Father, that He "liveth and was dead;" and no being but God, can be "the *first* and the *last*;" and, therefore, these divine persons must be *one* in essence. This deeply interesting truth was declared by the Redeemer himself, "I and my Father are *one*." John 10. 30. "He that hath seen *me*, hath seen the *Father*." "I am *in* the Father, and the Father *in* me." Chap. 14. 9, 10. There may be different divine Persons; but there can be no more than *one* God.

3. If Christ be "the *first* and the *last*, and yet a distinct Person from the Father, then we may infer, that the Holy Ghost may likewise be a distinct Person in the Godhead. Those who admit the *supreme* divinity of Christ, and *His* distinct Personality, will never dispute this point. No such inconsistent person was ever known in any generation.

It must be allowed, that every argument in favor of the Deity of Christ, is an equal proof of the Trinity in Unity. This doctrine irresistibly includes the personality and supreme divinity of the Holy Spirit. As the holy Scriptures, abound with evidence in favor of the proper Deity of the Spirit, the same arguments evince the supreme Divinity of Christ. When we take into view the different classes of testimony, they form a vast weight of evidence in favor of the whole Trinitarian system. A Triune God is the object of real faith, the foundation of solid hope, and the true ground of holy consolation to the followers of "*the Lamb*—who taketh away the sins of the world." In renouncing the belief of a Trinity of Persons in God, we close against ourselves the door of eternal life. It is an indispensable duty, therefore, to "contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." Notwithstanding the great subtilty, and unwearied exertions of our opponents in relation to these grand truths of the gospel, we feel that our feet stand on ground that cannot be shaken. The Lord of hosts has defended this ground in all ages, and he will continue to vindicate it to the close of time. His church is built upon "the rock of ages," and we have his glorious promise, that "the gates of hell shall never prevail against it."

4. If Christ is "*the first and the last,*" and yet a distinct Person in the Divine Essence, then we may infer, that applying Rev. 1. 8, to the Father, and urging the spuriousness of these words in the 11th verse, "*I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last,*" answers no valuable purpose; for, independently of these proofs, the *supreme* Deity of Christ is fully established, in the sacred writings. It is settled by the very same kind of testimony which these rejected passages furnish; and, therefore, the rejection of them amounts to nothing. We have no rea-

son, however, to doubt, but that Rev. 1. 8, ought to be applied to Jesus Christ; neither have we any reason to believe, that any part of the 11th verse is an interpolation. There is a *part* of it, indeed, not contained in the *Greek* manuscripts; and, therefore, Griesbach has left it out of his Testament; but the probable cause of this defect has been largely shown. When we take into view the *nature* of St. John's composition in his Apocalypse, this deficiency gives the 11th verse of the 1st chap. a very bad—a very *mutilated* appearance. As the Arians applied the eighth verse to the Father, no doubt, they clearly saw, that the 11th verse must be applied to the *Son*; and that, if it remained in the form in which it appears in our translation, nothing would be gained by their application of the eighth verse; and, therefore, to alter it, became necessary. If wicked hands have not been laid on that verse, I am fully satisfied, that its mutilated state in the *Greek* manuscripts, must have been the effect of carelessness in the transcribers. But happily for the cause of truth, the 17th and 18th verses, in their present form, prove all that could be supported by the 11th verse. The eighth verse of the second chapter, and the thirteenth verse of the twenty second chapter, fully establish the doctrine in debate; and they have complete evidence of their authenticity.

“Alpha and Omega,” are only *one* way of expressing “the *first* and the *last*,” and *this* phraseology remains in the 13th verse of the 22d chapter. The text on which this discourse is founded, settles the point which the 11th verse, as it is in our New-Testament, would support. We have, therefore, nothing to fear from the situation of the *Greek* manuscripts, in respect to the Divinity of Christ; nor from the celebrity of Griesbach's Testament, which is only the reverberation of their voice. Neither have our opponents any solid ground to triumph, on the account of these things.

Rev. 2. 8, standing in every version and manuscript, solemnly announces, that "Jesus Christ is the *first* and the *last*;" and, for this decisive testimony in favor of the foundation of our hope, we have reason to bless the Lord.

5. If Christ is "the *first* and the *last*," He "is the true God, and eternal life;" and, therefore, we have nothing to fear from the reading which the famous Griesbach gives to Acts 20. 28, in his purified Greek Testament. In our translation, that text reads thus—"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." The text in this form, is an invincible evidence of the Supreme Deity of Jesus Christ. Our opponents call this passage, one of the main pillars of the Trinitarian system; and triumphantly say, that Griesbach has thrown it down. What he has done is this—instead of "Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood," his reading is, feed the church of the Lord, &c. This reading, however, is very suspicious; and it is even doubted by some of the Anti-Trinitarians themselves. Mr. Wakefield is a sanguine Anti-Trinitarian; yet, he contends for the propriety of the word "God," instead of "the Lord." If he felt himself under the necessity of abiding by our translation; surely, *we* may concur with him in opinion. But even allowing Griesbach to be correct in this case; there is nothing *gained* by our opponents, nor *lost* on our part. Doubtless, it was Jesus Christ, whose blood was shed for sin; and, if he is called "the *Lord*" instead of "God," in Acts 20. 28, our text declares, that he is "the *first* and the *last*;" and therefore, He *is* God, and is so called in other parts of Scripture, whose reading cannot be disputed. It has been shown that He is called God, in Heb. 1. 8, and that our opponents have been forced to acknowledge it.

He is called by that name in the 1st chap. of John, and criticism has been baffled, in attempting to alter its reading. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was *with* God, and the Word *was* God." He is called the *mighty God*," in Isa. 9. 6, and every effort to vary its reading, has proved abortive—mere subterfuge—the expiring groans of a wounded system. In Rom. 9. 5, St. Paul says of the Israelites—"Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." This important passage has often been put upon the rack of criticism, to silence its voice; but every attempt has failed; and its enemies have been obliged to allow, that it stands fair in the English translation. To what has been said, 1 John 5. 20, may be added, "And we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the *true God*, and eternal life." To introduce the word "*Lord*," into Acts 20. 28, instead of the word "*God*," effects nothing, seeing that Jesus Christ is so expressly called God, in the highest sense of the word, in so many parts of the Scriptures. As He is "*the first and the last*," his Supreme Deity is sufficiently established.

6. If Christ is the "*the first and the last*," then we may be assured that He "*is the true God*;" and, therefore, we have nothing to fear from the reading which Griesbach gives to 1 Tim. 3. 16. In our translation, that text reads, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." Griesbach makes it read—"Great is the mystery of godliness: he who was manifested in the flesh." This, the Anti-Trinitarians say, is another pillar of the Trinitarian system, which that learned critic has cast to the ground. The justice of making the text read in this manner, is, however, very questionable. But allowing its accuracy, there is very little gained by our adversaries; for even on this ground, Christ must be *more*

than a *mere* man. "He who was manifested in the flesh," must either be "the true God," or some other pre-existing being. The 1st chapter of John's gospel settles this question. There it says—"The Word was *God*;"—"and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory." "He, who was manifest in the flesh," is called in our text, "the *first* and the *last*;" and, of course, He "is the true God." We have nothing, therefore, to dread from the situation of the text which we are now examining, even if it can be made to appear that Griesbach's reading is perfectly right. But powerful reasons might be offered in favor of the English reading, if the thing were necessary. Whatever may be the true reading of 1 Tim. 3. 16, it is a fact that "*God* was manifest in the flesh." As this is a truth, it is a very great evidence in favor of the English translation. Those who are in favor of a different reading, profess a religion that requires it.

7. If Christ is "the *first* and the *last*," then He *is* the *true God*; and yet a distinct Person from the Father.

This is a manifestation that there is *more* than *one* person in the essence of JEHOVAH. On this principle, 1. John 5. 7, is an exhibition of divine truth. All the arguments that can be raised against its *internal* purity, are as volatile as air, when it is expanded to the last degree. As for the *external* evidence which lies against it, we have great reason to think that it originated in wickedness. On this, that excellent commentator, Mr. Pool, says—"The text was undoubtedly in the original copies of the Scriptures; and the want of it in the copies where it does not appear, must be owing to the want of care in transcribing, or to a base design."

The gentleman with whom I have been contending, has predicted that "the time is at hand, when 1 John 5. 7, will be banished from our Bibles, and consigned to the

abodes of annihilation." On the contrary, I believe, that it will appear in them to the very end of time. It contains a doctrine, which beams forth in the Scriptures, like the unclouded sun.

The subject may be closed, with varying a little the last sentence of my opponent's discourse—"If any man, after being made acquainted with these various facts, now presented to him," in relation to the Trinity in Unity—the supreme Deity and atonement of Christ—the Personality and saving operations of the Holy Ghost, and "is so devoid of candor, of modesty, of the sense of shame and the love of truth, as to rely upon" the baseless fabric of Anti-Trinitarianism for acceptance with God; "I feel compelled to adopt the language of" inspiration, "and say," he is "denying the Lord that bought him, and is thereby "bringing upon himself swift destruction." But may the Lord Jesus Christ prevent this from being my opponent's portion, by turning him to a cordial belief of his perfect equality with the Father, through the riches of his grace, and by the regenerating power of his Spirit. AMEN.

X

SERMON XI.

ACTS XIII. 2.

The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them.

It is not designed to treat upon the designation of these men, to the work of the ministry; although *that* is a thing, evidently contained in this sacred passage. But my intention is to speak of *Him*, by whose authority they were sent to preach the gospel, and to administer divine ordinances.

This subject will bear directly, and with great weight, upon the authenticity of 1 John, 5. 7. The various doctrines of Scripture form one chain; and like the several parts of an arch, contribute to the strength, consistency and beauty of the whole.

The Holy Ghost being a person in the Divine essence, of equal eternity, power and glory with the Father and the Son, it is highly necessary to exhibit the arguments that support this glorious truth. Taking into view the circumstances under which we are placed by Divine Providence, it becomes our imperious duty to contend earnestly for the Trinitarian doctrines; for they are the fundamental principles of the Christian system.

The Deity and offices of the Holy Ghost have often been exhibited in my discourses in this town; but these

things have never been made an entire and distinct subject. The doctrine of the Supreme Divinity and operations of the Spirit, is, however, of sufficient magnitude to claim such a share of attention. In connection with what our minds have been upon for a series of sabbaths, the present subject will be pertinent.

The distinct personality, and peculiar offices of the Divine Spirit, have been flatly denied by many in *this* place; and by those, who, on many accounts, have a claim on our esteem. To establish and illustrate these sublime and interesting truths, will, therefore, be the definite object in the discussion of this passage. Your close attention is required, while an attempt is made.

I. To support the *Personality* of the Holy Ghost. This doctrine is fully contained in the text, and expressed with force and perspicuity. The Spirit is represented in it as commanding, and designating Himself by the personal pronouns, *I*, and *me*; saying, "Separate *me* Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto *I* have called them."

Our opponents frequently boast, that in the sacred narrative, called "The Acts of the Apostles," there is an entire silence in respect to Trinitarian doctrine; and that the whole of that history is formed on the simple principles of strict Unitarianism. But the text before us, evidently contains that which involves every Trinitarian sentiment. Nor is the passage which we have chosen as the present theme, a *solitary* instance of Trinitarianism; as we might easily show, if that were consistent with the present design. In our text, the Spirit is called "the Holy Ghost;" and this is the very name which He bears in 1 John 5. 7. As our Anti-Trinitarian friends object to this name, it is the *more* necessary that we should insist upon it, and more frequently use it, when we speak of the third Person of the ever blessed Trinity.

In respect to this case, the Rev. T. Lindsey says—"We should use the word *Spirit*, instead of *Holy Ghost*; because the latter is calculated to lead uninformed minds into the belief, that there is a *Person* besides the Father, *who is God*." How admirably cautious these writers are in guarding their readers on all hands, against every idea of a Trinity in Unity! But all who are acquainted with the Scriptures must know, that "*Holy Ghost*" is the appropriate name, by which the Spirit is distinguished from "the Father, and the Son." This is very clear from the commission which was given to the apostles by our Lord himself—viz. "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The apostolic benediction, is formed on the same distinction of Persons in the Divine essence, and the name of Holy Ghost is expressed, viz. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen." But I must not prolong the discourse by citing all the instances of this kind that might be mentioned. It is very surprising that Mr. Lindsey should be so particular in guarding his readers against the use of this name, seeing it *is used* between eighty and ninety times in the New Testament. If the sacred writers were *simple* Unitarians, they were very incautious and unguarded in using this name so frequently. This peculiar name is highly expressive of the Spirit's personality, which is the grand point we are now supporting.

Our theological adversaries, likewise, object to the use of the word *person*, in relation to the Deity, as not being scriptural; but we find it necessary, to avoid circumlocution, and to express a thing which we fully believe, and deem to be of the last importance in respect to salvation.

But to proceed with the point, let it be observed, that we

view the Holy Ghost as being in an important sense distinct from the Father and the Son—one possessing mind, agency, and properties peculiar to a distinct subsistence, which we, for the want of a better expression, call a person. We feel ourselves warranted to consider the Spirit in this light; and the doctrine is an unspeakable consolation to pious minds. He is neither the Father, nor the Son; and yet, He is mentioned in our text as an intelligent agent, possessing glorious authority, and to whose service, “Barnabas and Saul” were solemnly appointed by the religious rite of ordination. It is useless to plead that the figure of speech, called personification, is used here by the inspired historian. It is utterly inadmissible to understand it so in this simple unornamented narrative. Figures appear very beautiful in poetry, and in the elevated diction of eloquence, and are not calculated to mislead the mind; but there is nothing in the text, nor in its connection, to justify such a construction.

The sacred writer evidently speaks of the Holy Ghost, as a distinct agent, and one of equal authority and glory with the Father and the Son; and, therefore, He must be of the same Essence; for there can be no more than one eternal and Almighty God. The inspired penman had the example and authority of Jesus Christ, for speaking of the Divine Spirit in this manner. Nothing can be more definite on this doctrine, than Christ’s parting discourse with his disciples, recorded in the 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th chapters of John. There, in grave, simple, solemn and unornamented language, He saith to them—“I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that *He* may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him, for *He* dwelleth in you, and shall be in you.” And again, in

chapter 19. 26, the Redeemer saith—"But the Comforter who is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, *He* shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." And Jesus adds in the 15th chapter and 26th verse, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth who proceedeth from the Father, *He* shall testify of me." In the 14th chapter and 7th verse, Christ saith—"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." Our Lord proceeds, in the 13th, 14th and 15th verses, in saying—"When *He*, the Spirit of truth, is come, *He* will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall *He* speak: and *He* will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are *mine*; therefore said I, that *He* shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you."

If the Personality of the Holy Ghost is *not* established by these sayings of Christ, then, no language *can* convey the idea of it, nor *prove* the doctrine. Certainly, the Lord has spoken in the passages which have been cited, as if he meant to settle the question forever. The Divine Spirit is four times called, "the Comforter;" and He is 13 times mentioned by the personal pronouns, *He*, *Him*, and *Himself*:—and He is likewise called, "the Holy Ghost," the very *name* which Mr. Lindsey has cautioned his readers not to use.

The Rev J. Yeates, when he had examined the above mentioned passages, in answering his Trinitarian opponent, the Rev. R. Wardlaw, felt himself under the necessity of acknowledging his embarrassment. It is not an easy mat-

ter for the most acute disputant to evade or explain away such definite expressions, so often repeated. They can agree to no other doctrine but a Trinity in Unity ; and, on that ground, all is natural, beautiful, and important.

The above mentioned passages—the apostle’s commission and benediction—with the words which we have chosen for our text, sufficiently confirm the doctrine in view, if nothing more could be advanced in support of it. As the same kind of evidence, however, is extensive—a few passages more will be collected, to corroborate the testimony which has been advanced. Acts 15. 28. “ For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.” The Rev. R. Wardlaw, says on this passage—“ To speak of any thing seeming good, to a *mere* attribute or operation of the Deity, is a great deal more than unnatural :—it is nonsense.”

The apostles “ were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia ;” then, “ they assayed to go into Bithynia ; but the Spirit suffered them not.” Acts 16. 6, 7. Forbidding and preventing, most certainly denote *will* and *agency*. Such things cannot be consistently said of any of the Divine perfections or operations ; for, it is acting like God Himself. The *Personality* of the Spirit was, undoubtedly, the doctrine which the sacred writers intended to communicate, in what has been cited. When Agabus “ took Paul’s girdle, and bound his own hands and feet” with it, he “ said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.” Acts 26. 11. When St. Paul’s doctrine was rejected by the Jews at Rome, he said, “ Well spake the Holy Ghost, by Esaias the prophet, unto our Fathers”. Acts 28. 25. On another occasion, he said, “ the Holy Ghost witnesseth

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in every city, saying, that bonds and afflictions abide me." Chap. 20. 23. In his first Epistle to Timothy, 4th, 1st, he says, "Now the Spirit *speakeeth* expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith." In addition to what has been said on the Spirit's Personality, we will add these three sacred passages—"Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Heb. 3. 7, 8. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches." Rev. 3. 22. "But all these worketh that *One* and the *self same* Spirit dividing to every man severally as *He will*." I. Cor. 12. 11. The Personality of the Holy Ghost, appears in a very striking light from the Scriptures which have been exhibited. He is said to *come*—to *show*—to *teach*—to *testify*—to *receive*—to *hear*—to *speak*—and to *comfort* his people :—and He is distinguished from the Person of the Father, and from the Son, in an explicit and guarded manner. Such definite language on this sublime subject, is more than sufficient to seal the lips of Anti-Trinitarians forever. But if reason must decide in this case ; then, let the authority of the Scriptures be denied ; for this doctrine is certainly contained in them. To think of supporting a system of christianized Deism from the Bible, is really a very singular undertaking.

The Son, and the Holy Ghost, are mentioned as distinct persons in Matthew 12. 31, 32. In that passage, our Lord saith—"All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men :—but the blasphemy against the *Holy Ghost* shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him :—but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

The Spirit must either be a Person in the Essence of God, or else a mode of his operation. But, can it be, that

sins against Jehovah *may* be forgiven, while transgressing against one of his perfections is an unpardonable offence ! David sinned against God ; yet he received his pardoning grace :—and we are told in the passage that has been mentioned above, that sins against the Son may be blotted out. It is truly surprising, if it be more heinous to sin against a divine influence, than to sin against the very Person of God. It is also said in the Scriptures, that our sins *grieve* the Spirit ; but that cannot be literally true, if he be nothing but a mode of Divine operation. The reverse of this has, however, been sufficiently established ; and therefore, we shall proceed ;—

II. To prove the Supreme Deity of the Holy Ghost.

This will not be denied by those who are willing to allow that He is a distinct Person from the Father and the Son. It has been made clearly to appear, that, in His Personal capacity, He is neither the one nor the other ; and yet, I hope we shall be able to show, that he is truly God. This, we will now attempt to prove, from the names, perfections, and operations which are ascribed to Him in the inspired writings. And,

1. Some of His glorious names will be mentioned.

He is called God in the highest sense of that momentous word. When Peter admonished Ananias for his duplicity, he said—“why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?—thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.” Acts 5. 3, 4. “God is a Spirit ;”—and this Person in God is called, “the Holy Spirit”—and, “the Spirit of *God*.” St. Paul says—“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ?” 1 Cor. 3. 16. And again, he says—“your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.” Chap. 6. 19. In the 16th verse he adds, “Ye are the temple of the *living God* ; as God hath said—I will dwell in them, and walk

in them ; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." In this passage it appears, that to be the temple of the *Spirit*, and the temple of *God*, is the same thing ; and therefore, it is an incontestible inference, that the *Spirit* is *God*." The God, who dwells and walks in the saints, is therefore, the Holy Ghost. The Holy *Spirit* is so joined with the Lord of hosts, as to show that He is clothed with the same perfections, authority and glory. St. Paul says—" Now the Lord is that Spirit : and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." 2 Cor. 3. 17. It is very evident, that one and the same Person cannot be the Lord and the *Spirit* of the Lord. He is said to be the Spirit of the Son as well as of the Father , and, in the order of his offices, to be directed by them both. On this, St. Paul says—" And because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." Gal. 4. 6. Again—" Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. 8. 9. In speaking of the Spirit, Christ saith unto his disciples—" Whom the Father will send in my name." John 14. 26. Again, Jesus saith of the Holy Ghost—" Whom I will send unto you." Chap. 15. 26. It is unnecessary to say any more on the names which the Holy Ghost bears, to show that He is a Person in the Divine Essence, of equal eternity, power and glory with the Father and the Son.

2. The proper Deity of the Holy Ghost, appears from the infinite perfections which He sustains.

1. He is said to be eternal ; or, "from everlasting to everlasting." This can be said of no other being but JEHOVAH Himself ; and yet it is equally true of the Holy Ghost. In relation to this, St. Paul says—" If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh :—how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the *eternal* Spirit, offer-

ed himself unto God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." Heb. 9, 13, 14. If the Holy Spirit be *eternal*, He had no beginning of existence; and therefore he must be the living God. I shall rest the whole argument on this single proof: for it is irresistible.

2. The Supreme Deity of the Holy Ghost appears from His omnipresence. Dwelling in heaven, and in every saint on the earth at one and the same time, settles this point completely. The inspired Psalmist says to God—"Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" The omnipresence of the Holy Ghost, is, therefore, completely proved; and no other arguments are necessary. Omnipresence is a perfection which belongs to no one but the Lord of hosts, who is the "first cause and the last end of all things."

3. The proper Deity of the Holy Ghost appears from His omniscience. It is said in the sacred word, that "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." 1 Cor. 2. 10. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." verse 11th. It must surely be admitted on all hands, that no *mere* creature can *search* all things, and *know* all the secrets of the Almighty:—neither can these things be said of an attribute, nor of its operation. Such things bespeak knowledge and agency.

As it has been fully shewn that the Holy Ghost is *not* the Father, nor the Son, if such perfections belong to Him, they settle the point, that He is a *Person* in the essence of God, and of equal glory, with the other Persons in the Deity. The Bible, on any other scheme, is a mass of confusion—an inexplicable Book—a Book, calculated to mislead its readers—and has mislead the greater part of those into whose hands it has fallen. While it forbids idolatry on the pain of the Divine displeasure—threatening *that sin* with unlimited punishment—it has lead the great-

er part of Christendom into the very depths of *that evil* : and even such people, as have suffered the most of any on the earth, for what they have believed to be the cause of God and truth. These are facts which cannot be denied, without displaying a degree of temerity which baffles a parallel. But on the ground of Trinitarian doctrine, the language of the Scriptures is intelligible, harmonious and beautiful in the highest degree. Thus we have the clearest testimony in the sacred pages, that "the Holy Ghost is the third Person in the incomprehensible essence of JEHOVAH ; and that He is in all the Divine perfections, co-equal with the Father and the Son. The eternity of His being—His names—His omnipresence—and His omniscience, completely prove the soul-animating doctrine.

4. To this overwhelming evidence in favor of the Supreme Deity of the Holy Ghost, we may add His omnipotence. We are expressly informed in the book of Genesis, that, at the commencement of creation, "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. This is a manifestation of His creating energy. He displayed His creating power in forming the material heavens, as well as the earth. Job says of God—"By his Spirit He hath garnished the heavens." Job 26. 13. In respect to the various creatures which move upon the face of the earth, the Psalmist saith unto God—"Thou sendest forth thy *Spirit*, they are created." Psalms 104. 30. But more will be said on the omnipotence of the Spirit, when we come to speak of his peculiar offices. From what has been said, however, His proper Deity very fully appears. St. Paul speaks in Rom. 15. 19, of the "power of the Spirit of God;" and that saying evinces that he is not an operation, but an operator.

5. The Supreme Deity of the Holy Ghost appears from His unlimited wisdom. The creation of man was the

result of His *council*, in union with the Father and the Son. On this account God said—"Let *us* make man, in *our* image, after *our* likeness:"—and when he had fallen, God said—"Behold the man is become as *one* of *us*." Gen. 1. 26, and 3. 22.

The Holy Ghost is the acknowledged instructor of mankind; and executing this work is a manifestation of His infinite wisdom. A sacred writer asks this question—"He that teacheth man knowledge, shall He not *know*?" The answer is yes. This is an invincible argument that the Holy Ghost possesses the perfection of knowing in an infinite degree.

6. The Supreme Deity of the Holy Ghost appears from the sovereignty of His agency on the hearts of men. This glorious perfection cannot be ascribed to a *mere* name, or operation of God. In respect to the Spirit's sovereignty, our Savior saith—"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is *born* of the Spirit." He renews the hearts of mankind when and where He pleases, and passes by forever, whom He will. In the great work of salvation, His sovereignty is conspicuous; and He gives to no one an account of His ways. When this doctrine is expressly mentioned, and fairly understood, it fills the hearts of un-renewed men with wrath.

Sovereignty is a divine prerogative; and, as the Holy Ghost evidently possesses it in an unlimited degree, He is God—there is no being above Him. In relation to this, the prophet Isaiah solemnly asks—"Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being His counsellor hath taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him knowledge, and taught Him the path of judgement, and shewed to Him the way of un-

derstanding? Behold, the nations are as the drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold *He* taketh up the Isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. All nations before Him are as nothing; and are counted to Him less than nothing and vanity."

The Holy Ghost is evidently the Person the prophet has spoken of; and we see that he ascribes to Him the perfections of the Supreme Deity. St. Paul, in speaking of the various gifts of the Spirit, says—"But all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." The Holy Ghost, therefore, is *not a mere energy* of the Deity—but a proper Person—a sovereign, independent agent, to whom be glory forever. AMEN.

SERMON XII.

ACTS XIII. 2.

The Holy Ghost said, Seperate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them.

THE Personality and Supreme Deity of the Holy Ghost have been fully evinced in the preceding Sermon. I must now proceed in showing,

III. What the peculiar offices are, which he sustains.

His Almighty power has been clearly proved, in the general observations which were made on His creating operations. His equality with the Father and the Son, and his unity in the same essence, have also been established beyond the possibility of a reasonable contradiction. But He executes certain offices in the economy of redemption, which are peculiar to Himself, which manifest His Deity in a very glorious manner. In dwelling on these offices, we shall be led to a view of His extraordinary, common and gracious operations. It is the prerogative of the Father, to vindicate the rights of the Godhead—the peculiar office of the Son to make an atonement for sin, and intercede for believers; but it is the special work of the Holy Ghost, to prepare men for the service of God on earth; and for eternal glory in heaven. In this arrangement of offices, infinite wisdom and benevolence appear in beautiful

order and harmony. We may, therefore, look up to each Person in the Divine essence, as sustaining an important part in the stupendous plan and work of salvation.

This shows the fallacy of that Anti-Trinitarian objection, namely :—That our system leads us to view the Father as being void of love—possessing a vindictive and cruel character ; and to admire the Son and the Holy Ghost, as our particular Deliverers from the wrath of this angry Person in the Godhead. Such sayings manifest their want of knowledge, in relation to that scheme of mercy which we believe, and show the probable hostility of their heart, to the wonderful plan of redeeming love.

We can have no such feelings towards the Father as they suppose, for it is an essential part of the system which we have adopted, to believe that, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The Father fully approves of the work of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and they cordially approve of His vindication of the rights of the Godhead. There is an infinite harmony in their council ; and their operations are expressions of an equal benevolence. No one Person in God is, therefore, entitled to an exclusive share of our worship, or esteem. Salvation is the result of the unlimited love, and united council and operations, of the eternal and Triune JEHOVAH.

But it is with the offices of the Holy Ghost, that we are, at present, especially concerned. As he is a distinct Person in the Divine essence, it is necessary for us to understand His character and work—to know that He possesses equal eternity, power and glory with the Father and the Son, that every one of His operations evince his Supreme Deity. And,

I. His extraordinary agency will be noticed, in the great plan of redeeming grace. It was frequently exerted

in the ancient ages; but as the Divine design in that case is fully answered, it has been long discontinued; and, probably, it will never again be displayed. By this operation of the Holy Ghost, miracles were performed, and events predicted, which have transpired in the past periods of time, and will be continually taking place down to the end of the world. Such operations were necessary to display the glory of God, and to confirm our faith in revealed religion.

It was the power of this Person, in the Divine essence, that was displayed in Egypt, in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, in various ways. It was by His operation that Moses was inspired to write the first five books of the Old Testament; for it is asserted by an apostle, "That no prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Peter. 1. 20, 21. This truth is corroborated by St. Paul, in saying, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." 2 Tim. 3. 16. To be "moved by the Holy Ghost," and to be inspired of God, are the same thing; and, therefore, the Supreme Deity of the Spirit is irresistibly proved. All the extraordinary events which transpired under the ancient dispensation, were performed by the power of the Holy Ghost, as His peculiar office-work. His operations were also exerted in a high degree on the human nature of Jesus Christ, and in all the marvellous things which He did in the view of men.

To this fact, John bear record in saying, "I saw the Spirit descending like a dove, and it abode upon Him." A sacred writer says, "God giveth not the Spirit by *measure* unto Him." The Psalmist, therefore, saith to the Son, "God, thy God, hath annointed thee with the oil of

gladness above thy fellows." Psalms 45. 7. When the Pharisees accused our Lord with ejecting devils, by the power of Beelzebub, He denied the thing, and told them that it was done by the Spirit of God; saying "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." It was by the supporting power of the Divine Spirit, that Jesus passed through the pains of death, and rose from the grave. It is, therefore, said by the apostle to the Hebrews, that Christ, "Through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot unto God." St. Peter likewise says, that He was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

It is necessary, however, to remark, that the Holy Ghost exerted no such influence on Christ, as He does on men, in regeneration and sanctification. Such effects could not take place in Jesus; for He "knew no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." He was "holy, harmless and undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." The Spirit's office, in His case, was to anoint Him for His work, and to perform the things which require the power of the living God. But although such operations were the peculiar office work of the Holy Ghost, yet, in a certain sense, they are ascribed to each Person in the Godhead, as might easily be proved, if it were necessary.

Those various operations were displays of the power of one God, existing in three distinct Persons. This is an inexpressible mystery; but it is a well established fact, and a broad foundation for the hope of believers. The extraordinary gifts with which the apostles, and other primitive Christians were endowed, are called "the fruits of the Spirit." St. Paul says to the Corinthians, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit." As miracles were effected by the power of God, and by the Spirit,

they evince that the apostle considered the Holy Ghost as being truly God. In relation to this class of His operations, this sacred writer says, "But all these worketh that one and the self same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." It is also said in the same chapter, that "there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God who worketh all in all." But it is needless to enlarge; for the things which have been mentioned, fully prove the Personality and Deity of the Holy Ghost. Although such operations have ceased, we have sufficient evidence to believe that they were once exerted; and their importance in the kingdom of Christ was great, and they still serve to confirm our minds in the truth of the gospel. It must be a great crime, therefore, for us, under such advantages, to deny the Personality, Supreme Deity, and peculiar offices of the Holy Ghost. It should ever be remembered that there is a possibility of so sinning against Him, as to exclude us from pardon "forever." But,

2. I must proceed to speak of the *common* operations of the Holy Ghost among mankind. They have been exerted in every age, and will be continued down to the end of time. By the common operations of the Spirit is meant, those restraints which are laid on the human mind in regard to sin, and the fears which operate there about a future judgment and punishment. It is said in the Scriptures, that God withheld Abimelech from doing things to which his natural disposition prompted him. See Gen. 20. 6. It is thought by some, that all which is done with men in this case, is, to place motives before them, that are adapted to restrain them from moral evil. But as the hearts of men are in the hand of the Lord, we may be assured that they are kept back from many sins which they would otherwise commit, by a Divine operation on their minds; and that they have many feelings about reli-

gion, which they would never have, without that Almighty energy. The Spirit is said in the Scriptures to be striving with sinners. God, therefore, declared to the Old world, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Gen. 6. 3. This proves that men in that period of time were the subjects of the common and restraining operations of the Holy Ghost. The literal Israel, in every age, have greatly withstood this kind of divine influence. This made the apostle say to them, "Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye." As this is the general character of men, we have that solemn admonition, "Quench not the Spirit." Such agency on the human heart, evince the Spirit's Personality and power. As He is restraining and awakening mankind in all parts of the earth, at the same time, His omnipresence is evident, and his proper Deity established. Although such operations differ in their effects from those which produce holiness, they are testimonies of the Supreme Divinity of the Spirit. Producing such effects among mankind in every place and age, is, undoubtedly, the peculiar office of the Holy Spirit, and it has a direct tendency to promote the scheme of redemption. If the wicked were not constantly and every where restrained, in a greater or less degree, there would be no possibility of living in the world—the gospel would be excluded from the earth, and the conversion of sinners prevented. But the Divine intention is answered by such operations; for if it were the design of God to have them produce a saving change in sinners, nothing *could* hinder the event. Almighty power must be invincible. To believe differently is highly dishonorable to the character of the Lord of hosts, and an indication of pride, false confidence, and enmity against God. It may be truly said concerning such people, "Father, forgive them; for they know

not what they do!" The Lord is infinitely jealous of his own glory; and He will not give it to another.

It is now time to proceed in shewing,

3. What the *gracious* operations of the Holy Ghost are. It is not meant, however, that the operations which have been mentioned, are not gracious acts on the part of God. Restraining the unconverted from sin, is a great blessing to them, and also to others. In every favor that we receive, the Divine Giver is highly gracious. By the gracious operations of the Holy Ghost, we mean, however, that power which produces holiness in the heart, and conforms our lives to the revealed will of God. This is begun in regeneration, and continued in the work of sanctification. To effect these things, is evidently the office of the Holy Ghost; and for their accomplishment, we have the promise of God. For such effusions of the Spirit, the fervent prayers of the church ascend to heaven. To have an acquaintance with the Spirit's influence on the heart, is an important acquisition. We are, by nature, wholly "dead in trespasses and sins;" and it is by the power of the Holy Ghost, that we are made alive unto God. In regeneration, we turn from hating God, to the love of his perfections and glory. This change is always instantaneous, and is effected in a sovereign and gracious manner, by the energy of the Holy Ghost. To do this, He is sent down by the Father and the Son; and in his saving influences, He is fulfilling the eternal purpose of the One, applying the atonement of the Other, and executing his own peculiar office. As this work is his, it proves that He is truly God, which is the grand point in view. This doctrine may receive confirmation from the following passages, the first of which is, "Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which

is born of the Spirit, is spirit." John 3. 6. The passage to be compared with this, is John 1. 12, 13: "But as many as received" Christ, "to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

As this birth is effected by the agency of the Holy Ghost, and is called being born of God, we cannot but see, that the Spirit is *God*. This supports his Personality and Deity, and illustrates his office. That the Spirit, mentioned in the 1st of John, is the Holy Ghost, may be evinced from Tit. 8. 3, 4, and 5. "For we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." This passage settles the present point. It proves, beyond the power of ingenuous opposition, that the God and the Spirit, by whose operation the hearts of the saints have been renewed, is the Holy Ghost.

In the commission to baptize, and in the apostle's benediction, he is distinguished from the Father and the Son, with the same clearness of 1 John, 5. 7, notwithstanding the opposition which is made to its authenticity. It is by the sanctifying operations of this glorious Agent, that Christians grow in knowledge and grace. Their very bodies are called his temples, and it is by his gracious power every right feeling is formed in their hearts. This appears from these expressive words of an inspired writer, namely: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: Against such there is no law." In calling these things,

“the fruit of the Spirit,” the idea communicated is this, that they are all effected by his operation. This is called sanctification, to distinguish it from that instantaneous effect which is called regeneration. This is likewise ascribed to God, which proves the Divinity of the Holy Ghost. See 1 Thess. 5. 23. “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” We may see, therefore, that the sanctifier of men is “the God of peace;” and that he is the Holy Ghost.

Having fully proved his Personality, Deity, and Offices, nothing remains but the

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If these points have been fairly supported, it will follow, that a Trinity of Persons in the Divine essence, is a doctrine of the Scriptures. If we admit a plurality in God, there can be no difficulty in believing, that it consists in a Trinity. In this precise number of divine Persons, there has been an universal agreement, in all ages, among all classes of people, but the strict Unitarians—those who believe that God is one in Person as well as essence. Among all others, this harmony will, undoubtedly, be continued down to the end of time. This uniformity of sentiment, is a manifestation that the doctrine of the Trinity has not been fabricated by human art; for if that had been the case, the believers in a plurality of Persons in the Deity, would have differed widely in their ideas of the supposed number, in such an extensive world, and through such a long duration of time. This union of sentiment in relation to the doctrine in view, evinces, that it is founded on a standard which is more certain in its nature than the volatile imagination of man. Such an universal consent has

never been witnessed among the Polytheists of the heathen world, in regard to the number of their Gods. This fully proves that their schemes are creatures of their own imagination, and that our belief is the result of an unerring rule. To say, therefore, that a Trinity in Unity is not a doctrine of the Scriptures, is as frivolous, as to say that the sun does not shine upon us, when it is in its highest altitude, and without an interposing cloud between it and the human eye. Every passage that relates to the Divinity of Christ, is a proof of the Trinity ; and so is every one that teaches us the Personality and the Deity of the Holy Ghost. As to this article of our faith, we need not be ashamed ; for we may be always prepared to give an answer to every one who may be disposed to ask us the reasons of our hope, on this ground.

2. If the Personality, Deity and Offices of the Holy Ghost have been fully supported, then it will follow, that this subject, with the sermon that preceded it, give a powerful testimony in favor of the authenticity of 1 John, 5. 7. The passages which have been our themes in these discourses, completely establish the Supreme Divinity of the Son and the Holy Ghost, and their equality with the Father. The contested passage, only contains in itself what is clearly expressed in Rev. 2. 8, and in Acts 13. 2, in connection with a truth on all hands granted, namely : the Personality and Deity of the Father ; and the union of the Three in one essence, and their acting in the capacity of distinct Witnesses.

If the Supreme and Eternal Deity of the Son and the Holy Ghost have been sufficiently evinced, the union of the Three in one essence, cannot be consistently denied ; for the Unity of God is a doctrine fully established in the Scriptures. Every thing, therefore, which is contained in the compendious text in debate, is clearly revealed in the

sacred writings. This being the case, the Trinitarians have not been under the necessity, in any age, of forging such a passage. If a man be confident that a cause in which he is concerned in a court of justice, can be supported by sufficient testimony, he will not have recourse to bribery, to obtain the addition of false witnesses ; for that would injure his cause, instead of supporting it. We may, therefore, be well assured, that the text which has been so powerfully controverted, was never forged by any one ; and that it is the real word of God. To fabricate this passage to support a doctrine, which beams forth from the Scriptures like the unclouded sun, would really be a needless undertaking. We have no right to suppose this, unless our opponents can prove that it was actually done ; and if the text under consideration were an interpolation, it would be in their power to do the thing. That cause which labors the most, has the greatest need of wicked efforts to give it plausibility. In relation to the doctrine of the Trinity, and the passages which support it, we need not fear. The glorious truths of the Trinitarian system will be supported and believed, down to the burning day, in defiance of opposition.

3. If the Personality, Deity and Offices of the Holy Ghost have been supported, then it will follow, that there is an ample foundation in the mysterious mode of the divine existence, to save sinners, in a perfect consistency with the purest justice.

This is an unspeakable consolation, and therefore, the tenets which support it, merit a faithful vindication. If God were only one in Person as well as essence, he could not sustain and execute the offices in which his own glory and our salvation are included. His glory could not be displayed, unless there is one in the divine essence to maintain the rights of the Godhead—men could not be saved.

unless there is one to atone for sin, and intercede for them in heaven ; and that there should be one to form them by his operation for holiness and happiness, is equally necessary. The mystery of a Triune God, is, therefore, a glorious truth, and it secures to us a consistent way of eternal life.

4. If the Personality, Deity and Offices of the Holy Ghost have been supported, then it will follow, that those who deny these doctrines, are barring against themselves the door of heaven. If God is only one in Person, there can be no possibility of our standing before him in Judgment, unless we shall be able to make it appear, that we have always been as holy as the angels of light, or he shall consent to approve of sin, and so cover his own glory with an eternal shade. If He is not a Trinity in Unity, we may, with propriety, abandon ourselves to eternal despair. On such ground, annihilation, or endless misery, must be our portion. To take any other stand, as the foundation of our hope, would be giving up a Redeemer and a Sanctifier, forever. If these doctrines are true, God can never save one who continues to deny them through life. To contend against them is, therefore, the sealing of our souls to an everlasting death ! It would be doing the work of the Lord deceitfully, to take any other ground in the instruction of my hearers. In saying this, I am not conscious of possessing any malice towards those people, who differ with us in principle. In these great doctrines of the Bible, my mind has been fully settled for many years. As it has been proved that the Holy Ghost is *God*, may you all, my hearers, obtain an experimental acquaintance with this truth, through his renewing and sanctifying operations. AMEN.

SERMON XIII.



ISAIAH VIII. 20.

To the law and to the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.



A variety of opinions prevail in the world, concerning the doctrines that relate to God and eternity, and also about the duties which we owe to him, and to each other. There is no way of settling these things, unless there is an unerring standard to which we may resort. There is a great propensity in human nature to decide upon these questions by rules unauthorised from above. The heathen world, in all ages, have resorted to gods formed by their own hands ; and by their own imagination, for information concerning truth and duty. It is therefore said, in the verse preceding the text, "They say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards, that peep, and that mutter." Blind prophets, lying oracles, and false deities, were the sources on which the Pagan world have relied for their knowledge, from the commencement of time. But in this era of refinement and science, these things are justly discarded by many, who refuse to abide by the decisions of a divine standard, as much as by the unenlightened heathen. They are constantly appealing from the Holy Scriptures, to that tribunal which they call Reason. Right reason, however, is never

and to obtain his favor ; and some of them have been so ingenuous, as to acknowledge the fact. These truths might be easily proved from their own writings, if it were necessary. The feelings of men are so various, and their reasonings so capricious, that no correct standard of truth and righteousness could ever have been framed by them. Independently of the Holy Scriptures, we should all be in an abyss of moral darkness—without God—and without hope in the world. We should form no consistent idea of the manner of his existence—the moral perfection of his nature—the designs of his mind about us—how we should serve him—what we are in relation to immortality ; neither could we know whether it would be consistent with his glory to save us from sin and eternal misery.

From these considerations, we may see that a revelation of the Divine will is highly necessary for man. If there is a criterion of truth on the earth, it must be allowed that it is the Bible. It is reasonable to believe, that God would make some communications on these subjects to men ; and surely, the Scriptures bear the marks of Divinity, above every book that can be named. They could not have been written by wicked men, for they are directly opposed to their feelings and practices ; and good men would never have penned a volume of lies, to reform the world, however anxious they might have been to effect such a desirable event.

But, in addition to these arguments, it may be observed, that human ingenuity could never have invented a scheme of things, so mysterious, so deep, so extensive, so consistent with itself, so honorable to God, and so safe and easy for a sinful race of beings, in bringing them to God and holiness. In the view of these truths, we may clearly see that “the world by wisdom knew not God.” This is fully asserted by St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the Corinthians.

Convinced of the fact, he exclaims, "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching"—that is, by the simplicity of the instrument—"to save them that believe." 1 Cor. 1. 20, 21.

There could be no true preaching, without the Scriptures; and, consequently, no salvation. The necessity of them is obvious, therefore, without any farther enlargement. In connection with what has been said, it appears,

2. That the Scriptures profess to be the only standard of divine truth. They distinctly claim the sublime character of being the real Oracles of God. If this doctrine is not admitted, our text is calculated to deceive the reader. Wherefore should we be required to resort "to the law and to the testimony," if that rule is incompetent to decide religious questions? If the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures is not true, we can repose no confidence in them at all: for they expressly announce this to be a fact. One falsehood, therefore, would completely destroy their whole authority. In this view of the case, "What saith the Scriptures?" would be an impertinent question.

But a few passages, which assert the complete inspiration of the Bible, may now be selected, and presented to your view. In 2 Sam. 23. 2, 3, we read, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue; the God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spake to me." The prophet Isaiah says to the people, "Thus saith the Lord." Isa. 43. 1. When the nation of Israel were generally assembled, "Jehosaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." 2 Chron. 20. 20. It is also

said by St. Paul, that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17. In relation to this matter, another apostle says, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scriptures is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." 2 Pet. 1. 20, 21. St. Paul says again, "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." 1 Cor. 14. 37. St. Peter says, that in the Epistles of Paul, there are "Some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable, wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." 2 Pet. 3. 16.

These passages are decided testimonies in favor of the full inspiration of the Scriptures. The text which is the present theme, goes on the ground that every part of the Bible is the fruit of the Spirit, and the only rule of faith and practice. Unless this is admitted, we cannot see the propriety of saying, "to the law and to the testimony;" and, "if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." There is an observation, which Christ made himself, that bears directly on the point in question, namely, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." John 5. 39. His direction was altogether improper, unless these writings are of divine authority, and the only criterion of truth and error on all religious subjects. Neither could there, on any other ground, be truth and pertinence in that solemn warning, "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the

prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book ; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." Rev. 22. 18, 19.

This is an alarming declaration, and peculiarly calculated to guard us from thinking meanly of the Divine Oracles, or attempting to deny their entire inspiration. But, if that is given up, it can be no great crime to take from them such passages as we may deem unreasonable. Disbelieving some parts of Scripture, and teaching others to do the same, is really taking from the book of God. When once any part of its authority is seriously shaken, it must fail in having much effect on the human mind. We should, therefore, be exceedingly cautious in our conclusions, relative to any passage which is found in that sacred volume.

No text should be rejected as spurious, unless there is positive evidence of the thing, or because we find it opposite to the grand doctrines of the Bible. We cannot but see, from the passages that have been quoted, that the Scriptures do claim for themselves a complete inspiration and dominion over the belief of man. Every point that is proved by express Scripture, or by fair implication, must be considered as divine truth. Those who refuse to be convinced by such testimony, may be justly viewed as rejecting the counsel of God, "and of judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life." Acts 13. 46. This is an alarming situation.

But to the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, it is objected that St. Paul says in one of his epistles, "But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment." 1

Cor. 7. 6. The ingenious and elegant R. Wardlaw has offered some cogent arguments to prove the apostle's inspiration in this case. It is not, however, necessary to argue that point now. Those who wish to enquire into it, are referred to that author.

But allowing that St. Paul denies his being inspired in the case that has been mentioned; it proves his belief in the full inspiration of all the other Scriptures. If this is an exception, there is particular notice given of it. If any other part of the Bible was uninspired, we should, undoubtedly, be made acquainted with it likewise. The very text, therefore, that is brought forward as an objection, is a powerful evidence that the holy Scriptures are a complete standard, or "Test of truth." In my own mind, there is no doubt of the apostle's inspiration in the case in question. A fixed standard of doctrine and duty, is absolutely needed; and that must be either *Reason* or the *written Word*. We do not wish to condemn reason, but we must pronounce it incompetent to decide on many things, that are necessary for us to know, in relation to eternal salvation. This has been sufficiently proved and illustrated.

3. The Holy Scriptures have been received, in all ages, by the Church, as an unerring standard of doctrine and duty.

The Jews have always manifested a high veneration for the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and they have been peculiarly careful, from time immemorial, to preserve them either from being lost or corrupted. The martyr Stephen says, They "received the lively Oracles to give unto us." Acts 7. 38. In answer to the question, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there in circumcision?" St. Paul replies, "Much every way: chiefly because that unto them were committed the Oracles of God."

Rom. 3. 1, 2. It is said in honor of that nation, that they "Are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the Father's, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." Rom. 9. 4, 5. Notwithstanding the present infidelity of the Hebrew nation, in relation to the Christian religion, they highly venerate the Old Testament, and faithfully contend for its plenary inspiration.

Dr. Priestly has addressed a series of letters to the Jews, on account of the congeniality which he supposed to be between them and the Anti-Trinitarians, concerning the Unity of God in Person as well as essence:—but the hope of converting them to his views of the Old Testament, in relation to its being uninspired, might truly have been small. They have never embraced that opinion of their Scriptures; nor is there any probability that they ever will. The answer of their celebrated Rabbi, David Levi, to the letters that have been mentioned, confirms this remark.

The Jews have no dispute with us in regard to the plenary inspiration of their own Scriptures; and when they shall have the veil of unbelief removed from their eyes by divine grace, they will, undoubtedly, have an equally strong faith in the entire inspiration of the New-Testament.

They put false constructions upon their Scriptures, to evade their evidence in favor of the Divinity of Christ's Person and mission; but they have never shown a disposition to deny the complete authority of the Old Testament, in relation to doctrine and duty. There is a wide difference, therefore, between them and the Anti-Trinitarians, who assume the Christian name. We have a hold of the Jews

in arguing, on the ground of their belief in the full inspiration of the Old Testament, from which our Anti-Trinitarian opponents have broken loose. But their departure from the Scriptures, as a complete standard of divine truth, will be shown more fully in the sequel of this subject.

The great majority of the Christian world, fully agree with the Jews, in relation to the sacredness of the Old Testament, and their faith is equally strong, concerning the plenary inspiration of the New. This fact very fully appears from their public confessions of faith. It is needless to enter into the proof of this, by quotations from their numerous standards; for there is no probability that this statement will be denied. Whatever points of difference appear, among the various denominations of professing Christians, they are generally and happily agreed in this essential article of faith. It may be justly considered, therefore, as a fundamental principle in theology; and a dereliction from it, is a complete departure from all that which gives any claim to the Christian name. This assertion will readily be admitted as correct, by all the visible Churches of our Lord, in all parts of the earth. It is, therefore, made with unlimited confidence.

The denial of this, forms a strong resemblance—a near relation to avowed deists; and it lays a broad foundation for the adoption of their entire theory, in the progress of such a mode of investigation. This is a solemn reflection, and well calculated to alarm the mind of an immortal being—a being accountable to God. We have great reason to doubt the truth of such instructions, and to dread the influence of men, who are endeavoring, either openly or secretly, to unhinge our belief in the entire inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. This point must either be admitted, or else, to be consistent, we must deny that the Bible is of

any essential value; when, it is certainly announced that "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." This is either true or false. If it is true, we are bound to believe it; but if not, the whole authority of the writings that are called sacred, is at once annihilated. Such a palpable falsehood must destroy forever the credibility of any testimony. It is incumbent on us to take heed how we are led by the reasonings of men, "who lie in wait to deceive;" and who are, "with good words and fair speeches," corrupting the religious principles "of the simple" and undesigning part of mankind. The general agreement of the Christian world, in relation to the complete inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, is a powerful evidence that this article of faith is true, and founded on irresistible and ample testimony. On this head, the agreement of the church has been as general, through the course of eighteen hundred years, as it is at the present day. A number of my hearers have solemnly assented to this article of the Christian faith, in the presence of God, angels and men. You, my brethren, have laid yourselves under high obligation to resist every temptation to give up this cardinal point in revealed religion.

We have reason to fear, lest some of the members of our families should be induced to renounce the Trinitarian doctrine, under the peculiar circumstances in which we are placed in providence. To guard ourselves and them also, from such a catastrophe, is a thing of the last importance. Whenever we set aside the complete inspiration of the Scriptures, and refuse to acknowledge them as an unerring standard of truth; we are entirely afloat in relation to doctrine, duty and hope. When this ground is taken, our own opinion is the only guide. This appears to be the case with many, who enjoy the means of being better informed. They profess to extend charity to all men,

whom they think sincere, let their religious principles be what they may. This is believing that people may honestly misunderstand the essential truths of the Bible—reject them all—yet be sincere, virtuous servants of the Lord, and profitable teachers of mankind. But if this is a correct sentiment, then, God ought to acknowledge to men, that his word is expressed in such an enigmatical manner, that he has not given them sufficient abilities to comprehend its meaning. This view of the case, is very inconsistent with the following divine injunctions, namely, “If any man speak, let him speak as the Oracles of God.” 1 Pet. 4. 11. “If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed, is partaker of his evil deeds.” 2 John, 1. 10. “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” Gal. 1. 8. Such sayings are very impertinent and offensive, if the Scriptures are not the only *test* of doctrine and duty. If they are either obscure in their meaning, or destitute of divine authority, they cannot be sufficient to make us “wise unto salvation.” The point under consideration may, therefore, be viewed as fairly and forever settled. AMEN.

SERMON XIV.



ISAIAH VIII. 20.

To the law and to the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.



In the preceding discourse, it has been made to appear, that the Holy Scriptures are the only standard of decision on matters of faith and practice. In conformity with the order adopted, it is to be shown,

II. What the ways are, in which our opponents refuse to speak according to this rule. The Anti-Trinitarians, however, are not the only people who depart unwarrantably from this unerring standard. But there is no other sect that I know of, that take an equal liberty with the Scriptures ; whose teachers bestow such unwearied pains, and employ such learning and talents, to rase them to the very foundation. I shall now endeavor to make a short and correct statement of the various ways they have adopted, to accomplish their designs. And,

1. They assert, that the following passages, relating to the doctrine of the Trinity, and the Deity of Christ, are interpolations ; or, to use the words of the Rev. T. Lindsey, “ False readings, or alterations of the words of Scripture, made with design, or through mistake, before the art of printing was invented.”

The passages referred to, are these : Acts 20. 28 ; 1 Cor. 15. 47 ; Eph. 3. 9, 19 ; 1 Tim. 3. 16 ; 1 John 2. 16 ; 1 John 5. 7, and 5. 20 ; Jude, verse 25 ; Rev. 1. 11.

1 John, 5. 7, is the most vulnerable of any of the passages that have been mentioned ; and yet, as we have seen, the evidence of its authenticity is great. But the unremitting efforts of the Anti-Trinitarians to prove the above passages to be spurious readings, show the hostility of their hearts to the doctrines which they contain, as they stand in our translation. The end which they have to answer by effecting the death of these Divine witnesses, is such, that we may justly stand in doubt of *their* impartiality as Biblical critics. It is not my design, at present, to enter into an examination of the merits of the above list of passages ; but merely to show the engagedness of our opponents to overthrow the doctrines which appear to be "the Alpha and Omega" of the Holy Scriptures. They would not have bestowed so much labor in trying to prove the spuriousness of such parts of Scripture, unless they had assumed the opinion previously, that the doctrine of the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the Atonement, and the Personality of the Holy Ghost, are unreasonable doctrines. Taking this course, however, is not speaking according "to the law and the testimony," independent of the passages in question.

But, when the plea of interpolation fails them in supporting their cause, the next alternative is,

2. The charge of mistranslation. They have endeavored to place the following list of passages in that predicament. I shall place them in the order in which they appear in the writings of the Rev. T. Lindsey :—Isa. 9. 6, and 53. 8 ; Jer. 23. 6 ; Hos. 1. 7 ; Zech. 12. 10, & 13. 7 ; Matth. 12. 31 ; John 1, to the close of the 14th verse ; John 1. 15, & 10. 18 ; John 3. 18, & 5. 18 ; John 6. 23,

and 8:58; John 18. 3, and 17. 24; Acts 13. 26, and 4. 27, 30; Acts 3. 14, 15, and 7. 59; Acts 9. 14, 21; 1 Cor. 1. 2; Acts 18. 29, and 20. 28; Rom. 1. 3, 20; Rom. 9. 5; 1 Cor. 2. 14, and 10. 9; Gal. 4. 7, and 4. 32; Col. 2. 9; Phil. 2. 5, 6, 7, 8; Heb. 1. 2, 5, 6; John 3. 16, 18; Heb. 1. 8, and 2. 14, 16; 1 John 1. 12, 3.

No trespass, my hearers, shall be committed on your patience, by stating the reasons which are assigned for varying from our translation, in this list of passages. Some of them, however, are very extraordinary. Those who desire to see the matter investigated, are cheerfully referred to the Sermons of the Rev. R. Wardlaw, on the Socinian controversy. A number of the texts stated above, are ably defended by that eloquent and learned writer. All that I have now in view, is simply to show the perseverance and determination of the Anti-Trinitarian writers, in opposing the common doctrines of the Bible. When writers set out with the ardent desire of finding interpolations and mistranslations, we have great reason to be on our guard in relation to the result of their researches. No man would be willing to venture his life in the hands of a juror, if he knew him to be an enemy, whatever good opinion he might have of the extent of his learning, and the soundness of his judgment. People of reading must know that the Anti-Trinitarian authors differ greatly among themselves, as well as from other writers, in their criticisms on, and translations of the Scriptures. But the plea of mistranslation is one way in which they are endeavoring to effect an escape from Trinitarian doctrines; and that is all that I wish to prove at present.

In many passages, however, which relate to the doctrines in question, this subterfuge wholly fails them; and, therefore,

3. They have recourse to the plan of giving *any* mean-

ing to a text that it will *possibly* bear, rather than to allow it to stand in such a light as would afford support to the doctrines they are opposing. They have invented no less than *five* different ways of translating and construing Rom. 9. 5; which reads, in our translation, "Whose are the Father's, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." To enter into a view of the different methods they have taken to manage this text, is not designed; for the variety shows the difficulty in which they are involved, and their fixed determination to escape at *any* rate. Men who will have recourse to such means of defence, cannot be safely followed in their criticisms. Giving any meaning to a passage that it will possibly bear, in opposition to its literal and obvious import, is taking for granted the point in debate. The thing is not admissible on any other ground but this, that Trinitarian doctrine is an absurdity. It is not very ingenuous, however, to claim the victory by begging the question.

It is well understood, that the Anti-Trinitarians, very generally, deny the account which the evangelists give of the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ. Mr. Wardlaw says, this is done, "in defiance of all versions, and of all manuscripts, as well as of all the critics, and among the rest, Griesbach himself." He adds, "Is it possible to avoid a suspicion—is it a breach of charity to entertain it—that there must have been, in the minds of those who reject these chapters, a secret wish to find them spurious? a predisposition to lend a willing ear to whatever could be adduced, with even the remotest semblance of plausibility, to bring them into discredit?" The *fact* is this, the chapters alluded to, cannot be made to accord with the *simple humanity* of Christ; and, therefore, they *must* be given up at all events. If the whole Bible were as express on the

subject, as the chapters and passages in question, it would, of course, be entirely renounced on this principle. No man can prove the doctrines in debate, to people who have previously assumed the belief that they are an *impossibility*. Every thing that appears to support them, must, therefore, be removed on some calculation or other. But, surely, that is refusing to abide by the decision of the Scriptures, and making our own reason the *test* of truth and falsehood.

Concerning one of the five ways, which they have invented, of rendering Rom. 9. 5, Mr. Belsham says, " This conjecture, ingenious, and even probable as it is, not being supported by a single manuscript, version, or authority whatever, cannot be admitted into the text. But one may almost believe that the present reading might be owing to an inadvertence in one of the earliest transcribers, if not in the apostle's own amanuensis !!" See Belsham's *Calm Enquiry*, page 224.

This course is evading an equivocal, but unpleasant text, at *any* rate ! There is no possibility of standing before such reasoners ! People who see the beauty and importance of Trinitarian doctrines, must be greatly shocked in seeing such liberty taken with the Oracles of God. But when interpolation, mistranslation, and every other method of evasion, fails, our opponents have recourse,

4. To the open denial of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures. This is, confessedly, a strong assertion ; but it may be very easily supported, from the express sayings of some of the most eminent Anti-Trinitarian authors. It is said by St. Paul, that " All Scripture is given by inspiration of God ;" but the reverse of this is boldly maintained by Dr. Priestley, who was one of the most distinguished Anti-Trinitarians of his age. He says, in his letters to a philosophical unbeliever, " Not that I consider the books of Scripture as *inspired*, and on that account

entitled to respect. If you wish to know what, in my opinion, a Christian is bound to believe with respect to the *Scriptures*, I answer, that the books which are universally received as authentic, are to be considered as faithful records of past transactions. No Christian is answerable for more than this. The writers of Scripture were *men*, and therefore *fallible*; but all that we have to do with them, is in the character of historians, and witnesses of what they heard and saw. Of course, their credibility is to be estimated like that of other historians, viz. from the circumstances in which they wrote, or with respect to their opportunities of knowing the truth of what they relate, and the biases to which they might be subject. Like all other historians, they were liable to mistakes; and with respect to their *reasoning*, we are fully at liberty to judge of it, as well as that of any other men, by a due consideration of the propositions they advance, and the arguments they allege."

In a communication to Dr. Price, on this subject, he says, "Neither I, nor I presume yourself, believe implicitly every thing that is advanced by *any* writer in the Old or New Testament." In relation to all the sacred writers, he says to that gentleman, "I believe them to have been *men*, and consequently *fallible*, and liable to mistake with respect to things to which they had not given much attention, or concerning which they had not the means of exact information; which I take to be the case with respect to the account which Moses has given of the creation and fall of man."

In another part of his writings, he charges Moses with giving us "a *lame account*" of these things. Some of the British reviewers ascribed this saying concerning Moses, to the Dr.'s "*magnanimity*;" that is, his independence and elevation of mind. That the thing was bold, must be ad-

mitted ; but we think that it was more evincive of moral depravity, than of true greatness.

Dr. Priestley was undoubtedly a man of some learning and talents ; but such an attack upon Moses, was a high evidence of his infidelity, and no ornament to his character. With all his erudition, study, and mental force, the *best* of his writings fall infinitely beneath the sublimity of the Holy Scriptures. The one shows the learned, ingenious, and studious mind ; but the other bears the obvious marks of true Divinity, and is a bright display of the moral glory of God. There is as wide a difference, therefore, between the productions of a Priestley, and the writings of Moses, as there is between earth and heaven ! There have been *many* in the world, not inferior to Dr. Priestley in any respect, who have differed greatly from him in relation to the Scriptures ; and, no doubt, it is the case now, and will be to the end of time. To speak otherwise, would be a manifestation of moral blindness, and insensibility to the beauty of truth and holiness.

In direct opposition to the Apostles, Paul and Peter, and some of the Prophets, Dr. Priestly has said, “ That the books of Scripture were written by *divine inspiration*, is a thing to which the writers themselves make no pretensions. It is a notion destitute of all proof ; and has done great injury to the cause of christianity.” But in advancing unqualified and daring assertions, in opposition to Prophets and Apostles, Dr. Priestly was actually a “ magnanimous” writer ! In his first letter to Mr. Burn, he has the temerity to declare, “ That in no sense whatever, not even in the lowest of all, is Christ so much as called God in all the New-Testament.”

On this astonishing assertion, Dr. Fuller makes the following remarks : “ The method taken by this writer, to enable him to hazard such an assertion without being sub-

ject to the charge of downright falsehood, could be no other than that of laying a kind of *arrest* upon many sacred passages, as being either interpolations, or mistranslations, or something that shall answer the same end ; and by these means, imposing silence upon them as to the subject in dispute." "To be sure," says the Dr. "we may go on, killing one Scripture testimony, and stoning another, till at length, it will become an easy thing to assert, that there is never an instance in all the New-Testament, in which our opinions are confronted. But to what does it all amount ? When we are told that "Christ is never so much as called God in the New-Testament ;" the question is, whether we are to understand it of the New-Testament as it was left by the sacred writers ; or, as corrected, amended, curtailed, and interpreted, by a set of controvertists, with a view to make it accord with a favorite system."

It has been made to appear, that Dr. Priestley pointedly denies, that the Scriptures are the fruit of divine inspiration. He viewed them only, "as faithful records of past transactions." But, as the writers of the Scriptures declare that they were inspired, if Dr. Priestley is right, then they have told us a palpable falsehood ; and, therefore, they cannot be considered as faithful historians, nor even as honest men. Viewing the case in this light, it cannot be said that the Scriptures are a proper test of truth and duty. If the Dr. is correct, they may be summoned to answer at the bar of *reason* ; and if they do not approve themselves to its decisions, are as liable to be condemned as any other writings. It is entirely impertinent on this calculation, to exhort any man to go "to the law and to the testimony," to know what he should either do or believe.

Dr. Priestly, however, is not alone, in such daring attacks upon the Holy Scriptures. The Rev. T. Lindsey says,

in relation to the Person of Christ, "It must be owned, to have been left in obscurity in the Scriptures themselves, which might mislead readers, full of heathen prejudices." But if the Scriptures are calculated to "mislead" men, in judging of Christ, they are not very well adapted to inform them on any other subject; and, therefore, they must be in a great measure useless, unless it be to afford matter for religious controversy. A writer in the *Monthly Review*, agrees with Mr. Lindsey in saying, "The nature and design of the Scriptures, is not to settle disputed theories, nor to decide upon speculative controverted questions, even in religion and morality." It must be acknowledged, I think, that this is in fact, a plain denial of the inspiration of Scripture, and a rejection of it, as being the proper rule of truth and virtue. Another writer of this class, says of St. John, "If a concise, abrupt obscurity, inconsistent with itself, and made up of allegories, is to be called sublimity of speech, I own John to be sublime: for there is scarce one discourse of Christ, which is not altogether allegorical, and very hard to be understood." But to go on, another author of the same stamp says, "I shall not a little glory if I shall be found to give some light to Paul's darkness, a darkness, as some think, industriously affected." Let us hear another of the Anti-Trinitarian school, in relation to the historical events of the New-Testament, saying, "These narrations, true or false, are only suited for ignorant, uncultivated minds, who cannot enter into the evidence of natural religion." He adds, that "Moses, according to the childish conceptions of the Jews in his days, paints God as agitated by violent affections, partial to one people, and hating all other nations." In a note on 2 Peter, 1. 21. "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It is said

by one of these writers, "Peter spake then according to the conceptions of the Jews; and the prophets may have delivered the offspring of their own brains as divine revelations."

Mr. Blackwall says, concerning these men, "Let any of the followers of these worthy interpreters of the gospel, and champions of Christianity, speak worse, if they can, of the ambiguous oracles of the father of lies." The Rev. R. Wardlaw says, "From the views of inspiration, which these writers entertain, we are prepared to hear—for it is mournfully consistent—one of them charging the sacred penman with using language, even on the most important subjects," to which they *themselves probably annexed no very distinct ideas*; "and another accusing the author of the admirable epistle to the Hebrews with, "*far fetched analogies and inconclusive reasonings.*" Citations of of this kind might be multiplied; but sufficient has been said, to show the spirit of our Anti-Trinitarian opponents, and their manner of treating the Holy Scriptures.

If it should be said, however, that the faults of *some* writers ought not to be charged to the Anti-Trinitarians in general; I answer, let but one of all their writers be produced, who has expressly avowed his belief in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, and I will acknowledge the propriety of the remark. The statements that have been made, are proper samples of the community at large, as far as I have been able to extend my observations.

My authorities, for what I have said, are, Dr. Fuller, and the Rev. R. Wardlaw—gentlemen, deservedly esteemed in the Christian world, and whose character, as writers; for information, piety and truth, stand far above impeachment. Unlimited reliance, therefore, may be placed on the accuracy of what has been advanced, as the sayings of Anti-Trinitarian authors. In Fuller's Letters, and

Wardlaw's Sermons, the books and pages are expressly mentioned. My statements, however, will not be disputed; for the thing could not be done with success.

In the view of what has been said, it amounts to very little with our opponents, whether 1 John 5. 7, is a genuine text, or a forgery; for they deny the *inspiration* of the whole Book of God; and, therefore, if that passage were proved to have been written by St. John, all that they would have to do, would be to suppose that he had not given sufficient attention to the subject—was not properly informed respecting that doctrine, and that his reasoning is inconclusive. This observation will apply to every passage that they contest, as being either inserted or mistranslated. With such conceptions of the Scriptures, it must be expected that, they will dispute their authority without any fear, whenever they perceive them to be in opposition to their preconceived and darling system.

The opposition which is made in this town, to the doctrines that I have been defending, is very great. The *youth* are exposed to the contagion. They behold the controversy; but the want of years and experience, incapacitate them, in a great measure, to understand its merits. No doubt, they have supposed, that each of the contending parties were equally willing to abide by the decision of the Bible, in our translation; and, therefore, I feel myself under indispensable obligation to give them suitable information on the subject. Supposing that I should, through a false delicacy, decline the painful task, and they be left to embrace that destructive scheme; how should I answer it to God! How should I dare to meet them in the world of Spirits! Would this excuse me there, that some of *my hearers* disliked to hear controversy? No; a cringing, dependent mind, is infinitely unsuitable for a gospel minister. If I know my own heart, it is not for victory nor for parti-

that I have been contending ; but for truth—the glory of God, and the souls of men. “ To the law and to the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

The last clause of this passage will be the foundation of the next Sermon. Like Timothy may we “ know the Scriptures ; which are able to make us wise unto salvation, through faith that is in Christ Jesus.” AMEN.

SERMON XV.



ISAIAH VIII. 20.

To the law and to the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.



Two discourses have been delivered from this passage. In the *first*, it was shown, that the Scriptures are the only standard of faith and practice. In the *second*, the various ways were pointed out, in which our Anti-Trinitarian opponents refuse to speak according to this word.

In conformity with the general arrangement, it remains, III. To show, the reasons of their resorting to other grounds of decision. When the text was written, it appears that some were disposed to advise the Israelites to forsake God—to renounce his word as the only standard of truth, and to have recourse to other sources of religious information. In opposition to these pernicious instructions, the prophet said, “Should not a people seek unto their God? To the law and to the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

It is, surely, a sinful darkness, that causes people to depart from the light of divine truth. It is a manifestation that they have never been born of the Spirit—never conformed to the moral image of God. Men of great minds

and extensive science, are as deeply involved in moral darkness before regeneration, as the weak and illiterate part of mankind. Through the pride of carnal reasoning, they go astray, and reject the counsel of God. The simple truths of the Gospel were accounted, by the learned Greeks, "foolishness." They could see no consistency in salvation by grace, and through faith in a crucified Savior. It was exceedingly offensive to them, to be told, that they were such sinners as to deserve eternal damnation; that they needed sovereign mercy; and that they could not see the kingdom of God, without experiencing a change of heart. Scientific refinement, and conformity to a system of ethics, were the grounds of their reliance for acceptance with God. Hence, St. Paul says, "The Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

In all ages and nations, among all descriptions of men, "the preaching of the cross is, to them that perish, foolishness." "The carnal mind is enmity against God;" direct hostility to every essential doctrine of Scripture. Those people who are disposed to resist the idea of their being totally depraved anterior to regeneration, give the strongest testimony they possibly can, that this is in fact their own situation. No lively and well-informed Christian will ever dispute the entire depravity of man by nature. St. Paul says to a church, of whose members he entertained a high esteem, "Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light." Eph. 5. 8.

In the discussion of the present head, it may,

1. Be proper to observe, that those who refuse to speak

according to the Oracles of God, manifest that they have never been born of the Spirit. Hating the grand doctrines of the Gospel, is as great an evidence of impenitence, as an open transgression of the moral law. That God, who requires us to *obey* his voice, has also commanded us to *believe* his word. If we have been born of the Spirit, we shall have a respect for all the commandments of Jehovah. People may be moral to a certain degree, without having any regard to the Scriptures as a rule of life. Public opinion is the standard by which many regulate their behavior. They wish to be esteemed; and, therefore, they aim to conduct themselves in conformity to the general tone of morals. Their character depends entirely on the state of the society in which they are placed. Their external conformity to revealed religion, is, therefore, purely an accidental event. No example, however, will induce people to love the truth, as it is in Jesus Christ. Under the influence of such an example, they may assent to divine doctrines; but their hearts are as unreconciled to them, as the most open and daring opposers. "The carnal mind is enmity against God," under all circumstances. In this state, the heart is a chaos of moral darkness. No ray of divine light irradiates it for the space of a moment. It is no breach of charity to say, concerning the people who oppose the Trinitarian doctrines, that they have never been renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost; for they deny that there is such an agent in contradistinction from the Father, or such a change as we view regeneration to be, produced in any human heart. Those passages of Scripture which speak of that event, are construed by them to mean nothing but the resurrection of the body. They cannot, therefore, be the subjects of a change, which they themselves believe to be unnecessary, and even impossible. We profess to have an entire faith in both these doctrines;

and believe that it is because they have not been born of the Spirit, that they refuse to speak according "to the law and the testimony." It is said in the text, "If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." This is the same as to say that such people have never been "born of the Spirit." There may, however, be a considerable degree of darkness, in relation to the deep things of God, in the minds of some who have been regenerated ; but we cannot admit that it is so thick, as to lead them to an open denial of the Divinity and Atonement of Christ—the Deity, Personality, and saving operations of the Holy Ghost. These are fundamental principles in the scheme of revealed religion ; and when they are given up, it takes away all claim to the Christian name. No one can be a real Christian, who has not been "born of the Spirit." This has been fully proved by Mr. Wardlaw, in his admirable Sermon, on the Christian name. A departure from the cardinal doctrines of the Bible, renders the want of vital piety certain ; and every *degree* of heterodoxy, makes the thing, in some measure, doubtful. A complete soundness, in relation to the divine system, is necessary, to exhibit shining evidence of being a real disciple of Jesus Christ. Soundness in the faith, is closely allied to holiness in action. The *one* is the tree, and the *other* its fruit. Corrupting the word of God, is, therefore, no small crime in his view ; and we have cogent reasons for saying, that an attempt to overturn its fundamental principles, is a clear indication of being his enemies at heart. To say any thing less than this, would be a flat contradiction of the text which I am now illustrating. This would be a corruption of truth, to which, I hope, through grace, never to descend.

Concerning the *real* ministers of the Gospel, St. Paul says, "For we are not as many, who corrupt the word of

God, but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." 2 Cor. 2. 17. No fear need to be entertained, in a faithful declaration of every divine doctrine. It stands approved of God; and in it, the ministers of Christ commend themselves to the consciences of men.

There is darkness and light, therefore, in doctrines, as well as in actions. It is a mournful event, in itself considered, to evince, by the sentiments which men believe and inculcate, that they have never been born of God. It is a fact, announced by Heaven, of the teachers who "speak not according to the word," that "it is because there is no light in them." The case of those who are disposed to receive their doctrines, is no less deplorable.

2. The influence under which some people have been placed, is a reason why they refuse to speak according to the divine word. An inspired penman says, "Evil communications corrupt good manners." 1 Cor. 15. 33. The people who reject sound doctrine, have generally been taught to do it by false teachers and pernicious books, or such external causes as have had an influence over them. Therefore says the Prophet Isaiah, "The leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed." Corrupt doctrines, have as great a tendency to ruin the souls of men, as divine truth has to save them from death. The devil, therefore, has had an interest in inventing and spreading every species of theological falsehood, that has appeared in this fallen world. There is a love in the human heart to unsound doctrines, and an innate opposition to every part of divine truth. This made the wicked Israelites "say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits—cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." Isa. 3

10, 11. It is a very easy matter to delude people, when they have such a strong propensity to be deluded. False instructors, are the most dangerous men in society. It appears that God views them as the very dregs of mankind, from that solemn declaration, "The ancient and the honorable, he is the head; and the prophet that teaches lies, he is the tail." Isa. 9. 15.

God, in righteous judgment, sends such errors among men; for all events are under the government of his holy providence. In speaking of sinners, St. Paul says, "They received not the love of truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2. Thess. 2. 10, 11. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne;" and "he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy." Jehovah is an infinitely wise and glorious Sovereign; and "none may stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?" His word is "a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death;"—and, therefore, "it shall not return unto him void—it shall accomplish that which he pleases, and prosper in the thing whereto he sent it." As the human "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," sinners will oppose divine truth, whenever men appear to influence them to it, and to furnish them with plausible arguments against it. It is a great blessing when people are not under the influence of contagious doctrines. Those whom God intends to save are, in general, mercifully preserved from the ruinous influence of false instructions; for when people are corrupted in their religious principles, there is very little hope of their salvation. It can hardly escape notice that the greater part of the hopeful converts in revivals of religion, *youth* who have descended from pious parents, and

received a sound theological education. Those who have every thing to prejudice their minds against divine truth, ministers, and pious people, from their youth to the meridian of life, generally die as they have lived—the settled enemies of God. They refuse to “speak according to the law and the testimony;” often venturing to despise sacred things—even Christ and his church. It is a very unhappy event to have irreligious parents, and a pernicious early education. It is said by an inspired writer, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Truth and error are very opposite kinds of seed, and they generally produce a very different harvest.

Theological falsehood is a species of seed which will take root very readily in our depraved hearts; it will spring up soon, and its growth is generally luxuriant; for the soil is well prepared for such seeds of death. They quickly produce the “grapes of Sodom and clusters of Gomorrah,” ripening the soul for endless fire. The grand adversary takes great pains in employing every kind of delusion to support, enlarge, and perpetuate his detestable kingdom. As he taught our first parents to disbelieve God, so he takes every artful method to teach their infatuated children to deny the truth of his Holy Oracles, and all the doctrines and precepts which they contain. In departing from “the law and the testimony,” people show the schools in which they have been educated.

3. The great height to which moral depravity has risen in the heart, is another reason that may be assigned for receding from the Scriptures, as the only standard of truth. All men, by nature, are totally depraved; but there is a difference in the degrees of their wickedness. It is said in the Scriptures, “that evil doers and seducers, wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.” It is surpris-

sing to see the difference that there generally is, between young and old sinners, in point of candor and attention, in relation to religious subjects. The longer people live in the habit of rebellion against God, the more dense the darkness of the mind becomes. The hearts of many have grown as hard as the adamant stone, in relation to divine doctrines, whose moral character, in the view of men, appears very fair and respectable. Their *supposed* morality fortifies them against believing in a theological system, that makes salvation to be wholly the effect of free and sovereign grace. This was pre-eminently the case with the Jews, in many periods of time, and especially in the apostolic age. St. Paul, therefore, says—"I bear them record, that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." Rom. 10. 2, 3. No greater enemies ever appeared to the gospel, than the Scribes and Pharisees, and the devout and honorable people of the Jewish nation. Men of this character, conspired to slay "the Lord of glory," and executed a thing which made the earth tremble to its centre, and clothed the very heavens with a garment of the deepeth sackcloth! Rejecting the Scriptures, as the only standard of truth and righteousness, is actually "breaking" Christ's "bands assunder, and casting his cords from us." It is a sin of the highest magnitude. The aged and venerable Eli, the priest of the Lord, said to his dissolute sons—"If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" Men may, therefore, be very moral in respect to their fellow men, and yet be as hostile as fallen angels to God and his word. It is no small degree of depravity that makes people reject a

book, which is truth itself, and doctrines that are superlatively glorious. The Scriptures have a great hold on the conscience of man, until it becomes "seared as with a hot iron." Then he will contend against them with a degree of temerity, that is enough to astonish the very heavens! Every additional sin, serves to harden the heart and darken the understanding, in relation to things of a divine nature. When the word of God is renounced, as being the only proper guide, and *reason*, as it is called, placed in its stead, then that apostolic saying is literally fulfilled, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them; because of the blindness of their heart."

4. People flee from the Scripture as being the only *test* of truth, because that relieves their minds from the fear of eternity. That divine saying is strictly true, "A wounded spirit who can bear?" Every system of religious falsehood is soothing to the tortured conscience; for it throws a cloud over the divine character—diminishes the evil of sin—magnifies the *supposed* virtues of man, and hides eternal ruin from his view. Some schemes, however, are better adapted to produce a state of indifference, in relation to eternity, than others. The more any given system excludes of divine truth, the better it is calculated to lay the mind asleep. The scheme, to which these sermons are opposed, is well formed to operate as an anodyne, in respect to all religious seriousness. There is no other plan, bearing a Christian name, that I know of, that excludes so much of divine truth. It is, in fact, simple deism Christianized. It forms a complete veil, that hides every divine object from the sight. It has no concern with the Bible, in any other sense, than as a system of mere ethics. Its greatest difference from complete infidelity, is, in admitting the resurrection of the body. It has no other ter-

ror for impenitent sinners, but annihilation. This can have but little effect on people, who are neither willing to go to heaven nor hell. One of their own writers justly remarks, that the scheme does not consist so much in *believing*, as in *not* believing. In a word, it is a system of perfect moral darkness—excluding almost every truth of revealed religion, and the inspiration of the Book which contains it. Thus, the reasons have been assigned for their refusal to speak according to God's word; and, in so doing, they evince, as the text says, that "there is no light in them." As the Scripture says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 2 Cor. 2. 14. But let our attention now be turned, to a suitable

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If the Holy Scripture is the only standard of faith and practice, and *is* inspired, then we may believe that it *must* have been under the special care of Divine Providence in every period of time. If it has not been *dictated* by the Holy Spirit—if it has been *interpolated*—if it has been *mistranslated*—if it has been *essentially* corrupted in *any* way, it cannot be considered now as a certain criterion of the Divine will. Every one may receive or reject it at his own pleasure, without any danger of exposing himself to the anger of God on that account. The adversaries of Trinitarian doctrines appear to be very fond of viewing the case in this light. Those people, however, who believe in the plenary inspiration of Scripture, must, of course, believe that the providence of God has preserved it from being essentially injured by the hands of its enemies. No genuine Trinitarian is inclined so much as even to insinuate that the sacred writings are lame, in relation to any

point in the general system of theology. The men who are in the habit of inculcating a belief that the Bible is not the fruit of a plenary inspiration, and that it has been greatly altered from its original form, are endeavoring to support a system of doctrines which require such subterfuges. This book has existed in the midst of its enemies, in every age ; and if Divine Providence had not protected it from their rage, there would not be the smallest vestige of it remaining now. That part of mankind whose "mind is enmity against God," cannot be very friendly to a correct revelation of his character and will. This is the character of every human being, whose heart has not been renewed by the Holy Ghost. We need not be alarmed, therefore, when the cry is raised, that the Scriptures are not divinely inspired, or that they have been corrupted. It is our duty and privilege, my hearers, to abide by "the law and the testimony ;" and if our opponents choose to appeal to any other standard, let them answer it to God. We must believe that his "word is very pure," and the only rule that is of divine authority. It is a fountain of living water, whose transparency has never been discolored by the admixture of any foreign and polluted streams.

2. If the Scriptures are inspired, and are the only rule of doctrine and duty, it will follow, that an attack upon their authenticity is a bold undertaking. It requires such magnanimity as some of the British reviewers ascribed to Dr. Priestley, to attempt the thing without trembling. Men who are equal to this, must possess minds standing above the fear of every divine threatening. But from such magnanimity, may the Lord deliver us !

When men set out with an ardent desire of finding interpolations, mistranslations, or any other corruptions, in the Scriptures, it is an evidence that they are unfriendly to some of the doctrines contained therein ; and, therefore,

we need not be surprised, if God, in righteous judgment, permits them to think that they have succeeded in their researches, when there is no proof in the case, on which they may consistently rely. It has been noticed already, that the Lord suffers some people, for their wickedness, to fall into "strong delusions, that they should believe a lie." The Lord said to Israel, by a prophet, "Every one, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me, I the Lord will answer him by myself; and I will set my face against that man, and I will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and ye shall know that I am the Lord. And if a prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet; and I will stretch out my hand upon him, and I will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. And they shall bear the punishment of their iniquity: the punishment of the prophet shall be even as the punishment of him that seeketh unto him." Ezek. 14. 7—10.

Thus, we see, that when people seek after error, they may be righteously blinded. In criticising upon Scripture, care should be taken, lest we have some wicked end to answer by the thing. If we examine the Divine Oracles with a pure heart, we cannot fail in seeing that they are just like the God of purity and truth. The Scriptures will endure to the end of time; and, therefore, they who keep the nearest to them, are in the safest course. AMEN.

SERMON XVI.



GALATIANS IV. 17.

They zealously affect you, but not well.



MEN have invented various ways, in their depraved imagination, to escape deserved wrath and to obtain everlasting happiness. They are easily captivated with false schemes of theology ; but they are all more or less detrimental to their eternal salvation. From the text and its connection, it appears that men were much disposed to depart from the pure truths of Revelation, even in the age of miracles and inspiration. In relation to such people, St. Paul seems to have been deficient in displaying that charity, which is now by many, so highly applauded. He considered those, who taught doctrines opposite to his own, as troubling the churches of Christ. He had, in fact, the boldness to say, “I would they were even cut off which trouble you.” Gal. 5. 12. The teachers that he referred to, were hostile to the doctrines of grace ; and inculcated, what they called good works, as the proper ground of acceptance with God. He says to Timothy, “Desiring to be teachers of the law ; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.” 1. Tim. 1. 7. Every system of error, is calculated to flatter the pride of men—to hide the beauty of holiness—to justify the sinner, and to

eclipse the glory of God in the work of salvation. On this account, the Apostle set his face against theological errors, in all their varied forms, saying, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached—let him be accursed." Gal. 1. 8. He repeats this saying, in the succeeding verse, to show us the settled determination of his mind on this point.

From St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, it appears that many false teachers had entered into that church, and corrupted the principles of its members to a high degree. This led him to exclaim "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth!" Gal. 3. 1. Their schemes of error, however, seemed greatly to affect the minds of that people, and inspired them with an extraordinary degree of religious zeal. As they had such an effect on their hearers, no doubt, they appeared to be very zealous themselves, in all their performances. Their grand object was, to make the Galatians hate the true doctrines of the gospel—to love error—to esteem the teachers of it—and to despise the real Apostles and ministers of Christ. St. Paul, therefore, says of them, "They zealously affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that ye might affect them." He, however, does not condemn zeal of the right kind; for he proceeds in saying, "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing."

But, alas! men are more easily inflamed against the truth, than in favor of it; for their hearts are, by nature, totally depraved. Nothing short of divine power and grace, will incline them to the doctrines of truth and holiness. Human nature is the same thing now, that it was in the days of the inspired writers; and error has put on as great a variety of forms now, as ever it did in any ante-

cedent period. It has lost nothing of its deleterious effect, on the glory of God and the best interest of men. It may, therefore, be said of false teachers in general, "They zealously affect you, but not well."

The leading object in the investigation of this subject, will be to show,

THE BANEFUL EFFECTS OF CORRUPT DOCTRINES ON THE HUMAN MIND.

Every religious system has its own peculiar moral tendency. There are two grounds, from which the truth or fallacy, the excellency or perniciousness, of any given system of doctrines, may be argued. They are called by divines, *a priori*, and *a posteriori*. The former is reasoning from the nature of the system itself; and the latter, from its moral effects on the hearts and lives of men. It is the last method of reasoning that will be principally followed in discoursing on this subject. It is not my intention to animadvert on every religious denomination that might be proved to err in doctrine. Neither is it designed to meddle with such people as disown the Christian name. The teachers St. Paul speaks of in the text, undoubtedly called themselves Christian ministers. Taking this important name, has given great currency to ruinous theories in all ages.

A few general remarks may be made,

1. On a scheme of theology, whose moral tendency is very pernicious; and its relation to the subject in hand is sufficiently near to claim some attention. It is called Universalism. This system may be divided into two distinct classes, as there are some shades of difference; but the general principle is the same. Both these kinds of Universalists pretend to believe in the ultimate and eternal happiness of all men. One of these classes wholly denies all

punishment beyond the present life ; but the other admits a limited state of misery after death. It is no part of the present design, however, to examine the arguments by which these different schemes are *said* to be supported. There is no doubt, in my mind, that they are both fallacious, and of a destructive moral tendency. You, my hearers, are undoubtedly, in general, of the same opinion, in respect to this denomination. It is not easy to say, which of these schemes is the most ruinous to the souls of men ; but they are both highways to eternal death. They perfectly agree in softening down the law of God—in diminishing the evil of sin, and in opposing the belief that divine justice will ever be executed on the sinner, in a way of endless misery. No time need to be spent in proving that both these theories lead to a life of dissipation, and great indifference to all experimental and practical religion. This is sufficient to show that they are not of divine origin, nor calculated to convert the souls of men to God. A mournful want of religious seriousness, evidently appears in all the members of this fraternity—preachers and hearers. They generally speak of sacred things with a great degree of freedom and levity. Their general air indicates an unhumbled mind ; and very little prayer is to be heard among them. It is said, in the Scriptures, to be the work of the Holy Spirit to convince men of sin ; but no such impressions appear to be on any of their minds. In this community, no one is ever heard to ask the solemn and momentous question, “ What shall I do to be saved ? ” until he is convinced of the error of their system. They appear to have much less fear of sin, than the generality of unawakened sinners. In a word, Universalism is a doctrine of darkness, and the first preacher of it was the grand enemy of God—the deceiver of mankind. He told our primitive parents, that in transgressing the Divine com-

mand, they should escape punishment ; saying, “ Ye shall not surely die.” This is the very essence of Universalian doctrine ; but in believing it, we must disbelieve God ; for he has expressly said in the Scriptures, that “ the wicked shall be turned into hell ;” that they “ shall go away into everlasting punishment.” Ps. 9. 17 ; Matth. 25. 46.

The scheme in view is, therefore, opposite in its nature and effects, to the best interests of society, as well as to the eternal salvation of the soul. But in hearing it preached, many are “ zealously affected,” and filled with a certain kind of love to the character which that system leads them to believe God sustains. It produces in them, however, no new obedience ; which is a clear evidence that its nature is spurious. The very men of the world are often forced to acknowledge, that the moral tendency of the doctrine is opposite to good order and righteousness. Still, it is propagated with great zeal, to a wide extent, and is highly applauded by many who have no desire to reform their ways. As it is a pleasing doctrine to the wicked heart, we need no further evidence of its falsehood. Its votaries, in general, abhor the doctrine of sovereign grace. But in opposing the justice of God, in the eternal damnation of the sinner, the beauty of divine mercy cannot be seen ; such people can have no sense of their need of it. Therefore, to be affected with this scheme, is “ not well.”

2. There is another system, whose distorted features, it is the principle design to delineate, in the prosecution of this subject. It is the very theory to which the preceding sermons stand opposed ; namely, Anti-Trinitarianism. This general system may be divided into several distinct species ; from the consideration, that some of them allow *more*, and others *less* degrees of dignity to the Lord Jesus Christ.

They are all, however, equally opposed to the doctrine of a Trinity of Persons in God—to the proper Deity and

Atonement of the Redeemer. But these slight shades of difference, do not interrupt their harmony, nor greatly impede their operations in opposing the Orthodox. My remarks, however, will be principally made on that class of Anti-Trinitarians, who reside in this vicinity. They are the disciples of Socinus rather than of Arius, yet, they seem to be unwilling to take the Socinian name. The difference seems to be this ;—Socinus advocated the propriety of worshipping Christ, while he believed him to be nothing but a man, which our modern Anti-Trinitarians, with a greater consistency with the scheme, refuse to perform. I have not been able to learn, that there is any other material difference between Socinus and the Anti-Trinitarians in this region. It is the moral tendency of the system, as it is held here, with which we are chiefly concerned. In attending to that, however, the nature and tendency of the system at large may be ascertained.

The plan, to which these discourses stand opposed, is essentially different from our views, in every prominent feature. If that is divine truth, then we are as really idolaters as the heathen world ; but if we are correct, then our opponents are nominally christians, but real infidels. These conclusions cannot be consistently denied ; yet the Anti-Trinitarians seem to be loth to admit them. This arises from their latitudinarianism, and the non-importance which they attach to doctrinal opinions. But that is mere pretence ; for they show the greatest possible opposition to Calvinistic doctrines, and declare that they are hostile to all virtue—repugnant to the glory and government of God. These things will be made to appear, in the subsequent part of this subject.

I am, by no means, disposed to take offence at their sayings on these points ; for if their system is the right one, they must necessarily believe, that we can never go to hea-

ven in our idolatry. It is said in the word of God, that "idolaters shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Rev. 21. 8. It is equally clear, that if we are right, they are "denying the Lord that bought them;" and the Apostle says, that such people are "bringing upon themselves, swift destruction." 2 Pet. 2. 1. The difference, therefore, between these systems, is as great as that between light and darknes, heaven and hell. Shall we then compliment each other, as fellow Christians? No; no such relation can exist between us. It is justly said by one of their own writers, that "people, whose religious sentiments are so dissimilar, cannot be fellow worshippers in the same temple."* The effects of our system and their's, therefore, must be entirely different on the human mind. In the next sermon, I shall attempt to show more particularly, how the scheme that I am opposing, operates on the hearts and lives of men. AMEN.

* The Rev. "Samuel Miller, D. D. Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government, in the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, at Princeton," says, that he had an interview with "Dr. Priestley, two or three years before" his "decease," at which time, Dr. Priestley said, "I do not wonder that you Calvinists entertain and express a strongly unfavorable opinion of us Unitarians. The truth is, there neither can, nor ought to be, any compromise between us. If *you* are right, WE ARE NOT CHRISTIANS AT ALL; and if *we* are right, you ARE GROSS IDOLATERS." [See the Southern Intelligencer for March 30, 1822, page 50.]

SERMON XVII.



GALATIANS 4. 17.

They zealously affect you, but not well.



One discourse has been delivered from this passage. The proposition deduced from it, is,

THE BANEFUL EFFECTS OF CORRUPT DOCTRINES ON THE HUMAN MIND.

In the illustration of it, some remarks were made,

1. On a scheme of theology called Universalism, which holds a *near* relation to the system against which these sermons are levelled.

2. Some general things were said on the moral tendency of Anti-Trinitarianism. But in descending to particulars, we may observe,

1. How that system leads its advocates to treat the Scripture and its doctrines. It has been fairly proved, in the preceding sermons, that they wholly deny the plenary inspiration of the Bible. The evidence of this fact, therefore, need not be repeated. The writings which we consider as sacred, they treat with as little ceremony as the productions of any other faithful historians. In one word, they believe what they please of them, and reject the rest. Their whole scheme appears to be doubtfulness, and open denial. They deny the Trinity—the Deity of Christ—his Atonement—the Personality and peculiar Offices of the

Holy Ghost—the decrees and sovereignty of God—the unalterable nature of the moral law—the uncancellable obligation of all intelligent beings to perfect holiness—unconditional submission—disinterested benevolence—total depravity—instantaneous regeneration by the Spirit's power—the certain perseverance of the saints—and eternal punishment. They make great objections to the justice of God, in punishing any of his creatures. The belief seems to be greatly prevailing among them, that the souls of men sleep with their bodies until the resurrection, and that the wicked are to be eternally annihilated. When the plan is closely examined, it appears to be a compound of infidelity and Arminianism. As far as it relates to the full inspiration of the Scriptures, and the manner of the divine existence, it is nearly allied to simple Deism; and as it relates to other doctrines, it leans to salvation by works instead of grace. It is, therefore, a medley of almost every thing that is false and pernicious. I am, by no means, alone in this opinion; for every writer among the Orthodox has made similar observations. If I know my own heart, I am far from wishing to misrepresent any thing that is believed by my opponents. If they are willing to assent to *any* of the points that I have said they deny, let them avow their belief; and I will cheerfully retract what I have said. It would give me much pleasure to have them acknowledge any of the essential doctrines believed by the Orthodox. On a subject of such magnitude, honesty is beautiful; it is the best policy that can possibly be pursued.

2. A brief view will be taken of what the Anti-Trinitarian system leads its advocates to believe. Their articles of faith are few, and unimportant. They differ from mere infidels, however, in admitting that God has made some communications of his will to the Prophets and Apostles; but they deny that he has so far superintended their wri-

tings, as to secure them from error. They think themselves justifiable, therefore, in using their own reason to correct the productions of those messengers of Heaven. They differ in some degree, also, from the Deists, in relation to their view of Jesus Christ. It is admitted by both sects, that there was such a man; and both believe that he was nothing but a man. The Anti-Trinitarians, however, believe that he was sent of God, to instruct men by his precepts and examples, and to seal the truth of his mission by his death; but these things are wholly denied by avowed Deists. So much difference really exists between these denominations. But, by the Orthodox, that disparity must be considered as a trivial matter—as a shade scarcely discernible, when compared with *their* views of “the Lord of glory.” If the Supreme Divinity of Christ is given up, the foundation is sapped at once on which the Church is built.

The Anti-Trinitarians acknowledge that there will be a resurrection of human bodies; and that is the only essential thing, besides the being of God, in which they agree with the Orthodox. They seem to be much pleased with their own soundness in this respect; and we are willing to give them credit for it. A future and general judgment, is a doctrine allowed by them, and that Christ is to be the judge; but they differ greatly from us, in relation to the circumstances of that momentous scene. But acknowledging Jesus Christ to be the judge of the world, is wholly inconsistent with the belief of his simple humanity. No mere creature can be capable of raising the dead, and of properly discerning the character, and deciding the destiny of angels and men. To think that a *mere man* is suitably qualified for these high operations, is infinitely more unreasonable, than a belief of the Trinity in Unity. Raising the dead, and judging the intelligent

worlds, are said in Scripture, to be the proper works of God. David says, "God is judge himself." Ps. 50. 6. In St. Paul's defence before king Agrippa, he said, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" Acts 26. 8. - If these things are the proper works of God, and yet are performed by Jesus Christ, it must follow, that he is the Supreme God. When we take into view the very few things which our opponents will admit as the truths of the Bible, it must be greatly altered to have it accord with their sentiments. If they are correct, that book must have been so *interpolated* and *altered* by the Trinitarians, that no confidence can be reposed now, in any part of it. Every one may take the liberty of setting aside what he pleases of its contents; and, if some should be disposed to deny the whole, they could not, on their principles, be deemed very guilty.

3. It is necessary to consider the light in which the Anti-Trinitarian system leads its advocates to view the character of God. In denying his decrees, as they relate to all events in the natural and moral world, divine wisdom is impeached, and God is, in a great degree, dependent on his own creatures.

As I understand their plan, it is a very material part of it, to believe that the supreme end of Jehovah in his works, is the happiness of his intelligent creatures, instead of the glory of his own name. This is an impeachment of his power, for many of them, contrary to the original intention of God, will have to be eternally annihilated.

Dr. Priestley says, "Those who assume to themselves the distinguishing title of Orthodox, consider the Supreme Being as having created all things for his own glory, and by no means for the general happiness of all his creatures." This sentence shows, very fully, that *his* opinion accords with what I have said of the Anti-Trinitarian system.

There are two grand difficulties, however, attending the idea, that God makes "the general happiness of all his creatures," his supreme end. The *first* is, that the thing would be the preference of a *less* to a *greater* good; and the *second* is, that if this is God's supreme end, it is never like to be accomplished. This would be charging the Creator of all things with folly in his plan, and imbecility in its execution. Their views of the divine character are, therefore, unreasonable, and contrary to the Holy Scriptures. The Bible positively says, that "God hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." Prov. 16. 4. The Lord also saith—"Every one that is called by my name, I have created him for my glory." Isa. 43. 7.

But the reason of their believing that God makes "the happiness of *all* his creatures" his supreme end, is probably this, that they cannot love him on any other consideration. This, however, is the very state of the human heart by nature—it "is enmity against God." Rom. 8. 7. False systems of theology eclipse the moral character of the Deity; and it is for this purpose, undoubtedly, that such schemes are invented and promulgated.

No plan can be better calculated to give wrong impressions on this subject, than Anti-Trinitarianism; for none that professes any belief in the Scriptures, can be more repugnant to them. That Book leads us to consider it as high evidence of God's glory, that "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne;" and that he "will by no means clear the guilty." The human heart is violently opposed to this representation of the Divine character. In relation to this view of vindictive justice, Dr. Priestley says, that in holding it, we "represent God in such a light, that no earthly parent could imitate him, without sustaining a character shocking to mankind." It

is evident, however, that the Scriptures do represent him as an absolute sovereign in the government of the universe, and as an "avenger of iniquity," in relation to finally impenitent sinners; punishing them "with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." As our opponents consider these things to be unamiable traits in the character of Jehovah, we must believe that they stand opposed to that which is moral beauty in unlimited perfection. This is "striving with their Maker," and saying, "Why hast thou made me thus?" The whole scheme, therefore, is calculated to excite rebellious feelings in the human breast, against the moral character of the Almighty. Their teachers expressly say, that it is not consistent with infinite goodness, to make an intelligent creature, whose misery shall be such, that his existence shall be worse than to have no being.

They all appear, therefore, to be settled in the opinion, that either there will be a universal restoration, or that the wicked will be eternally annihilated. A universal restoration, is the avowed belief of Dr. Priestley. He says, no one of his sentiments "supposes that any of the human race will be eternally miserable;" and that "God has created us all for happiness—ultimate, unlimited happiness." But notwithstanding the Dr.'s opinion on the subject, many of his brethren profess to believe in the doctrine of annihilation. In this, however, they are pretty much agreed, not to exhibit any terror to sinners, either from the press or the pulpit. They must, of course, believe that these passages, "Wo unto the wicked! it shall be *ill* with him;" and, "It had been good for that man, if he had not been born;" with many others of similar import, must be *interpolations*, or *greatly altered* by the Orthodox, in making the translations in which they appear. But in

their system, we find much of the same spirit that is reprobated in the 50th Psalm: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." Any scheme of religion which serves to overthrow the doctrine of vindictive justice, is pleasing to the unreconciled heart; but that is a certain evidence of its fallacy. When criminals argue in their own favor, *their* reasonings may be very different from the judgment that an enlightened and impartial court will pass upon their case. The Anti-Trinitarian plan is, unhappily, at variance with every essential doctrine contained in the Oracles of God; and it gives us a view of his moral character, which is the very reverse of that which is given there. It is, therefore, false; and ought to be rejected by all men, now and forever. But,

4. We may take a concise view of Anti-Trinitarianism, as it relates to the character of man. Here, my hearers, a cloud of moral darkness appears, that is thick and awful as the darkness of midnight, and which nothing but omnipotence can dispel! An eye that cannot see the glory of God, must be, in an equal degree, blind to the moral deformity of man. In the Scriptures, the whole human race are represented as being totally sinful—depraved from the very commencement of life, and under condemnation, until they are renewed and pardoned.

This doctrine very fully appears from the following expressive passages; namely, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." Rom. 8. 7. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." John 3. 6. "There is none that doeth good, no not one." Rom. 3. 12. "There is no fear of God before their eyes." Verse 18. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." 1 Cor. 2. 14. "The wicked go astray as soon as they be born." Ps. 58. -3.

“Behold I was shapen in iniquity.” Ps. 51. 5. “Cur-
sed is every one that continueth not in all things written in
the book of the law to do them.” Gal. 3. 10. “If any
one offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” James 2. 10.
“The wicked shall be turned into hell.” Ps. 9. 17.
“These shall go away into everlasting punishment.”
Math. 25. 46. “He that believeth not, shall not see life ;
but the wrath of God abideth on him.” John 3. 36.

With these declarations of God in our mind, let us now
proceed to examine the Anti-Trinitarian theory. How
soon the sound is changed ! By that system we are taught,
that man is born in a state of perfect innocence, and through
his whole life, more inclined to virtue than to vice. In rela-
tion to the first opinion, namely, that we are born in a
state of innocency, I shall not adduce any thing from their
writings to prove it, being fully assured that there is not
one, of that fraternity, who would wish to assert the con-
trary. Even in regard to the sins of adults, the most soft
and extenuating expressions are used by their writers, when
they speak on the subject. Mr. Belsham calls sin “human
frailty,” and those who commit it, “the frail and erring
children of men.” This is very gentle language when
speaking of that, which God saith, “My soul hateth.” A
certain writer, in that liberal school, says, “The Supreme
law-giver determined from the beginning to mitigate the
rigor of the law, to make allowances for human error and
imperfection.” Is not this, my hearers, lessening sin at
a wonderful rate ? yes ; it is pleading the sinner’s cause at
the expense of divine honor.

But in relation to human virtue, that class of men con-
sider it as having no cause extrinsic of men, but the em-
pire of motives. Dr. Priestley says of man, that “his own
disposition and actions are the necessary and sole means of
his present and future happiness ; so that in the proper

sense of the words, it depends entirely upon himself whether he be virtuous or vicious, happy or miserable. But, how does this assertion accord with St. Paul's declaration? "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Rom. 9. 16. The same Apostle expresses a very different sentiment, in asking, "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou, that thou didst not receive. Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" 1 Cor. 4. 7. Thus you see, my hearers, that the Anti-Trinitarian view of human virtue is wild in the extreme, and at war with the Scriptures. It evidently raises the character of man beyond the bounds assigned to it in revealed religion. Mr. Belsham has so high an idea of the inclination of man to virtue rather than to vice, that he says, "In process of time, the earth may revert to its original paradisiacal state—and death itself be annihilated." This shows very clearly, that though Anti-Trinitarians glory in their own own supposed rationality, and eminent attainments in the empire of letters; that they are not altogether invulnerable to enthusiasm. They take great care, however, to apprise us, that this wonderful change in the condition of man, is to be effected without any special agency of the Holy Spirit. Nothing of that nature *can* be admitted in their theorizing minds. No; all is to be done by moral suasion and human energy—the glory must be ascribed to man, instead of God. But the agreement of such schemes with Revelation, is unhesitatingly submitted to your judgment.

As to our various opinions on points of doctrine, Dr. Priestley says, "There are no errors but what men may be so circumstanced as to be innocently betrayed into; and that any mistake of the head is very consistent with rectitude of heart." St. Paul, therefore, must have been mis-

taken, and highly censorious, in saying, "If any man preach another gospel unto you, let him be accursed." As the innocency of false sentiments in matters of religion, is not a doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures, advocating it must be very wicked. But, to justify sinners at all events, in almost every thing, appears to be one of the *most* prominent features in the Anti-Trinitarian system. The Bible, however, tells us, "Not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think ;" to "accept the punishment of our iniquity ;" to put on humility as a garment ; to rejoice in the sovereignty of God ; and to acknowledge freely our dependence on his power and grace. Such unconditional submission is a beauty in the character of man, and the only proper way of honoring God. We cannot stand on any other ground before the glorious tribunal of the Almighty. He says expressly, "He that covereth his sins, shall not prosper ; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy." The system of our opponents has little to do with such feelings and acknowledgments. Being whole in their own imagination, they see no need of such a Physician as we suppose the Lord Jesus Christ to be. Human virtue is confessed by them to be the ground of their dependence. On these sacred words, "Other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid," one of their writers says, "All other foundation beside a good moral life, is chimerical"—a flat contradiction of the text on which he professes to found his remark. The liberty which they take with the Holy Scriptures, is truly astonishing ! The art and assiduity which they display, in making every thing on their side of the question appear plausible, exceed description. Nothing is left undone that will veil the true character of God, and flatter sinners with the idea of their own virtue and safety. There were a set of teachers also in Israel, who cried

peace, "when there was no peace." It may be justly said to such instructors, "With lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life." Ez. 13. 22. A system, whose most prominent feature is to lessen human guilt, and to lead mankind to rely on another foundation for salvation besides the atonement of Christ, is certainly hostile to the Scriptures in a high degree. An Apostle says, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. 2. 8, 9.

If any religious scheme on the face of the earth is false and dangerous, and opposite to the Gospel of Christ, it is Anti-Trinitarianism in its lowest Socinian form. It is, I hope, in friendship to them, as well as to the cause of the Redeemer, that I speak in this manner. I am not conscious of having the least malevolence towards any one of that denomination. They may rely on every act of kindness that I can render them, in accordance with a faithful testimony against their doctrine. If I know my own heart, I wish them to be happy here and hereafter; not excepting the gentleman who has appeared as my opponent. I have no apprehension that he has taken this stand from any unkind feelings to me; for his deportment has been uniformly conciliating and respectful.

My prayer is, that the Lord may lead him into a belief of the truth, and to the love of it; that he may follow the steps of the famous Dr. Scott, who once stood on the same untenable ground in relation to religious sentiments.—
AMEN.

SERMON XVIII.



GALATIANS IV. 17.

They zealously affect you, but not well.



IN Illustrating the baneful effects of Anti-Trinitarian doctrines, on the hearts and lives of men, it has been shown,

1. That they lead them to treat the Holy Scriptures, with an unbecoming freedom—to deny much of their contents, and to believe very little—to have wrong views of the glorious character of God ; and to have wrong conceptions of the state and character of men. These are serious evils ; but I think, that they have been fully substantiated ; and therefore I shall proceed in showing,

5. How the system in view, leads men to have low conceptions of Jesus Christ, and consequently, but a small degree of love to his name. It seems to be a point decided in the minds of the Anti-Trinitarians, that He is nothing but a man. They can of course have no belief in the atoning efficacy of his blood ; nor, with consistency, render to Him supreme worship. He can have but little pre-eminence in their view, to the Prophets and Apostles. They suppose him, indeed, to have been sent of God to teach men truth and duty by his precepts and example ; and that he sealed his mission by his death. On this calculation, however, he

only stands *first* on the list of human, but divinely authorized messengers from God. We cannot, therefore, be much more indebted to him, than to many others, who have appeared in the capacity of divine instructors, on the plan in question. Surely, the Anti-Trinitarians themselves must be at a loss, how to understand and define the measure of love which men owe to the Lord Jesus Christ. If he is no more than a creature, the love which belongs to him from men, must be infinitely less than that which is due to God. On the Anti-Trinitarian plan, great care must be taken, lest the love that is felt for Christ exceeds its due limits; and the reverence that is given to him, degenerate into idolatry. On this ground, however, they do not seem to be in much danger of erring; for, it appears to be a prominent feature in their scheme, to sink his dignity instead of deifying him; and all the teachers on that side of the question, seem to be on the alert in giving it the proper application. In general, they are coolly philosophising on the supposed impossibility of his deity, instead of bowing the knee to him in supreme worship. We may search the ranks of the Anti-Trinitarian host in vain, to find any bright examples of love to the Son of God! No; it is their constant employment to throw water on this divine flame.

The contrast between the teachers in their Israel and the inspired writers, in relation to the dignity of Christ, and the love which is due to his name, is astonishingly great. Do they say that he is *a mere man*? see how the prophet Isaiah differs from them on this subject. While he admits his humanity, he announces his divinity in accents of triumph; saying, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called, *Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of peace.*"

Isa. 9. 6. All the statements of Scripture, relating to the complete Person of Christ, run in a similar strain of exultation. St. John says of Him, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word *was God*.—All things were *made* by Him.—In Him was life; and the life was the light of men.—That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.—The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory." John 1. 1, 3, 9, 14. Under divine authority, St. Paul asserts, that "He is over all, God blessed forever." Rom. 9. 5.—"That by Him all things were created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him: and He is before all things, and by him all things consist." Gal. 1. 16, 17. That He hath "a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth." Phil. 2. 9, 10. The Father himself, saith unto the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.—And thou Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the works of thine hands." Heb. 1. 8, 10. This is but a mere specimen, however, of what the Scriptures say, in relation to the Person and dignity of Christ. We meet with no such sayings, in the works of Anti-Trinitarian authors. Such language would be to them an abomination.

The Holy Scriptures are equally express, as to the degree of love which we owe to the glorious Redeemer. In them, Christ says to us, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." Matth. 10. 37. In Luke, it is said, "Yea; his own life also." Chap. 14. 26. A supreme love to Jesus Christ, is

the most prominent feature in the character of his disciples. To that class of men, St. Peter says of Christ, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." 1 Pet. 1. 8. In relation to this, St. Paul says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha." 1 Cor. 16. 22. Again, he says, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Eph. 6. 24. But to *such* views of the Redeemer's Person, and *such* love to his name, the Anti-Trinitarians appear to be utter strangers. In fact, Dr. Priestley says, "In no sense whatever, not even in the lowest of all, is Christ so much as called God in all the New Testament." He is not, therefore, in the Dr.'s esteem, so highly honored as some men, of whom the Lord saith, "Ye are gods." Such a low opinion of Christ's Person, never can lead those who have it, to render any great degree of love to his name. Seeing the whole body of Anti-Trinitarians appear to admire Dr. Priestley, it must follow, that they agree with him in respect to Christ's Person, and the degree of love to which he is entitled.

But let their views and feelings be compared with the following ascription of praise which is offered to Christ in heaven; namely, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." Rev. 4. 12. The dread of the Anti-Trinitarians of becoming guilty of idolatry, must forever prevent them from saying, Amen.

Thus, my hearers, a system, whose tendency is to chill our love to Christ, must be considered as having a baneful effect on true piety. Real christians, therefore, must view every degree of approximation to it, with a holy fear. But,


6. It is necessary to show how the theory in question,

leads its deluded votaries to treat the Orthodox. In some of the preceding sermons, we have seen the sanguinary manner in which they were dealt with, in the Arian ages.

I have been informed, however, that the gentleman in opposition, has availed himself of the death of Servetus, by the concurrence of the deservedly esteemed John Calvin, as an offset to what I have said in relation to the persecution that the Orthodox suffered from the Arians. But that solitary instance of impropriety, on the part of that great reformer, is a light balance indeed, against the murder of thousands and tens of thousands, who fell under the hands of Anti-Trinitarians, in the fourth and fifth centuries. He is welcome to all the consolation which he can derive from that circumstance, and to all the evidence it affords in his favor. If the Rev. John Calvin is as guilty as he insinuates, we wholly disapprove of his conduct; but much might said in his defence, if it were not a departure from the main subject.

It is, however, well understood, that our opponents lay an almost exclusive claim to candor, benevolence, liberality, and every other moral excellence; while *we* freely acknowledge our imperfections to be great, in every thing that is excellent. But Dr. Fuller very justly remarks, "that the candor of which the Anti-Trinitarians so largely boast, is pretty much confined to their own party, or to those who are near akin to them. Socinians can be kind to Arians, and Arians to Socinians, and each of them to Deists; but if Calvinists expect to come in for a share, let them not greatly wonder if they be disappointed." The hatred they feel to our system, leads them to say many things not very congenial with that charity to which they lay so high a claim. Let us hear Mr. Lindsey in relation to this. He says, "The doctrine of Christ being possessed of two natures, is the fiction of ingenious men, determined

at all events to believe Christ to be a different being from what he really was, and uniformly declared himself to be ; by which fiction of theirs, they elude the plainest declarations of Scripture concerning him, and will prove him to be the most High God, in spite of his own most express and constant language to the contrary. And as there is no reasoning with such persons, they are to be pitied, and considered as being under a debility of mind in this respect."

In speaking of the celebrated Augustine, one of their writers calls him "a pretended saint, but an illiterate hypocrite, of wicked dispositions." Alas! all his humble confessions could not wipe away, in the view of this writer, the crime of his Trinitarianism. By another of these candid gentlemen, the Orthodox ministers are called "a set of fools and enthusiasts ; staring, stamping, and damning in nonsense ; whining out the tidings of salvation, telling their auditors that grace is cheap, and works are all an empty bubble." But all this is far exceeded by another of these liberal authors. He says, "I challenge the whole body and being of moral evil itself, to invent, or inspire, or whisper any thing blacker or more wicked ; yea, if sin itself had all the wit, the tongues and pens of all men and angels to all eternity, I defy it to say any thing worse of God than this. O sin ! thou hast spent and emptied thyself in the doctrine of John Calvin. I renounce the doctrine as the rancor of devils ; a doctrine, the preaching of which is babbling and mocking, its prayers blasphemy, and whose praises are the horrible yellings of sin and hell!" This is an awful specimen of candor, liberality, and Christian charity! No doubt, their hatred of the doctrines of grace is great ; neither do we suppose that their feelings are very pleasant in relation to those who inculcate them.  is human nature—"enmity against God ;" and,

therefore, all our resentment should be prayers and tears. It is important, however, that we should guard against a system which leads to such feelings and expressions. We know who hath told us, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." Let us, therefore, say like Him, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do." In relation to such a virulent spirit, we should remember that inspired saying, "And such were some of you." The brightest of the saints have once been "children of wrath, even as others." This is a humbling consideration, and calculated to produce in our hearts the law of kindness, even towards enemies. The voice of God to us is, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice; and be ye kind one to another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Eph. 4. 31, 32. For "the fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Gal. 5. 22, 23. The religion of Christ teaches us, "Not to be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another."

We have our doubts, whether the system of our opponents leads to such a spirit; but if it does, it will appear, notwithstanding all that we can say. To the judgment of candid observers, therefore, the systems must be submitted which we profess to believe, in relation to their moral tendency. In faithfulness, we must deny the truth of their scheme, and the possibility of being Christians with such principles; and these things will, of course, subject us in their view, to the charge of bigotry and superstition. But nothing which they can either say or do, will justify us in bringing against them, "a railing accusation." It behoves us to show, by the meekness of our temper, and the propriety of all our sayings, the purifying tendency of the doctrines we profess. We may, however,

have an unfavorable opinion of a doctrinal system, and of its moral tendency, without having any unkind feelings to its advocates.

7. We will proceed to show how the Anti-Trinitarian system leads men to neglect the everlasting concerns of the soul. In relation to this, they, in general, appear to express very little anxiety. A revival of religion, is a thing unknown in their connection. A change of opinion in favor of their scheme, is all the conversion they seem to wish to produce. With such a change, in connection with a common degree of morality, *they* appear to be entirely satisfied. They seem to have no conception of the nature and necessity of that, which the Scriptures call "*A new heart.*" Many of them wholly deny the separate existence of the soul.

The doctrine of materiality is strongly advocated by Dr. Priestley, and it seems to be very generally received by the Anti-Trinitarian fraternity. By that philosophy, there is not an immaterial spirit connected with the body, and all mental operations, result from the peculiar modification and organization of mere matter. That system, of course, will lead its adherents to believe, that the mind is wholly suspended by death, until the resurrection. It is not the design to attempt a confutation of that theory at present—that is reserved for a subsequent discussion. It is sufficient for my present purpose, just to observe, that this philosophy may be one thing, that leads to that religious indifference, which seems to pervade the whole Anti-Trinitarian denomination. On this ground, there is nothing to excite either hope or fear, between death and the resurrection; and such impressions may very naturally lead to a secret hope, that none of mankind will ever be disturbed from the repose of the grave. Be that, however, as it may, it is very obvious that there is but little religious

concern among those who believe in the Anti-Trinitarian doctrine. Who ever heard of one of them asking that solemn question, "What shall I do to be saved?" Who ever saw such an inquirer, with an unshaken belief of that doctrine? This would not be the case, if the system had any tendency to produce serious reflections. No one on that side of the question, appears to be burdened with a sense of guilt, nor with a sense of his need of sovereign mercy. In relation to eternal concerns, a remarkable ease appears on every countenance. The preaching of the Apostles certainly produced very different effects on the minds of men. How can this be accounted for, on the supposition that the system in question is truly evangelical? That Trinitarian doctrines very frequently move the hearts of men, and alter their lives, are facts that cannot be very easily denied. But why should falsehood now have such an effect as truth *once* had, and truth be heard at present with a cold indifference? May we not expect similar effects under similar causes, in all ages? This difficulty must hang like a dead weight on the Anti-Trinitarian system, in the view of impartial observers?

Under the preaching of St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, his numerous audience "were pricked in their heart;" three thousand were converted, and added to the church in one day. No such seal of heaven has ever been set to the preaching of the Anti-Trinitarian theory, in any age. If I saw such glorious effects flowing from it, I should not venture to oppose the thing. It is really surprising that any arguments should be thought necessary to convince men, that there is no truth in a system, that is as barren of all good fruit as the deserts of Africa! The finger of God is evidently pointed against it in every generation, by refusing to accompany its promulgation with his blessing.

It seems, that the *simple humanity* of Christ, and deny-

ing the Personal existence and renewing operations of the Holy Spirit produces no alarm, either on the mind of the instructors nor the instructed. All are in profound peace. But we need not enlarge ; for the force of these remarks must be deeply felt, by this congregation. The appeal is made to your eyes, your ears, and your conscience. The subject is not a matter of mere speculation—it is of the very last importance.

That the Anti-Trinitarians live in the frigid zone of the Christian system, appears very clearly from the following observation, made by Dr. Priestley. He says, “It is not necessary to dwell in our thoughts on death and futurity, lest it should interrupt the business of life, and cause us to live in perpetual bondage.” But this forms a grand discord with the following Scriptural admonitions ; namely, “Prepare to meet thy God.” Amos 4. 12. “Boast not thyself of to-morrow ; for thou knowest what a day may bring forth.” Prov. 28. 1. “Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” Rom. 14. 12. Thus we may see, that the Anti-Trinitarian writers are at war with the Scriptures, in almost the whole of their communications. We are not, therefore, at liberty to hear them, until they speak *more* “according to the law and the testimony.” Our eternal interest is too precious to be tampered with in such a manner. It is acknowledged by Dr. Priestley, that “a great number of the Unitarians,” as he calls them, “of the present day, are only men of good sense, and without much practical religion ; and that there is a greater conformity to the world in them, than is observable in others.” It must be allowed, that this was a great deal for him to say ; but as to the propriety of it, we readily subscribe.

Thus, when we say, that their system leads them to indifference in relation to the concerns of the soul, it is on

their part, in a great degree, admitted. But the necessity of making such concessions, must, I think, have been very mortifying to such an advocate for the Anti-Trinitarian cause, as was Dr. Priestley.

8. A concise view may be taken of the plan, as it relates to the evil of sin. Their thoughts of that, appear to be superficial to a mournful degree. They seem to see no need of any other atonement for it, but repentance and reformation. According to their arguments, eternal punishment is quite disproportioned to the magnitude of that evil. A certain writer in the Monthly Review, says, "We are neither amused nor edified by the coruscations of damnation. Nor can we, by any means, bring ourselves to think, with the late Mr. Edwards, that the vindictive justice of God is a glorious attribute." Mr. Belsham says, "If God is so severe as to mark every instance of iniquity, we must needs consider him as a merciless tyrant, and wish that the government of the universe were in better hands." They contend, that our virtues are a sufficient satisfaction to the justice of God, for all the offences of which we may have been guilty. Dr. Priestley says expressly, that "repentance and a good life, are of themselves sufficient to recommend us to the Divine favor." But Mrs. Barbauld is more bold than Dr. Priestley. She says, "When a man like Dr. Price is about to resign his soul into the hands of his Maker, he ought to do it not only with a reliance on his mercy, but his *justice*. It does not become him to pay the blasphemous homage of deprecating the wrath of God, when he ought to throw himself into the arms of his love." This is valuing our supposed virtue at a high calculation; and sinking the evil of sin to a great degree. It is self-righteousness without any covering. The complete contrast of this doctrine with the Holy Scriptures, cannot escape the eye of the most superficial observer. Sin is by

no means treated in this extenuating manner in that inspired volume. It informs us, however, that "fools make a mock at sin;" that it is against God; that it is exceedingly sinful; that it is the thing that his soul hateth; and that it is as the poison of a serpent. But the system under consideration leads the mind to reduce the number of sins, as well as to lessen the magnitude of its evil. It leads us to suppose, that the sins of men bear but a small proportion to their virtues. Concerning this case, Dr. Priestley says, "Virtue bears the same proportion to vice, that happiness does to misery, or health to sickness, in the world." Is not this judging in our own favor to a high degree? But, if there were no higher tribunal, all would be well. We may be assured, however, that the Dr.'s opinion will have but little influence on the decisions of the great day; that it will appear as a very incorrect calculation, when the secrets of all hearts are developed. We obtain no such impressions from the Bible, as the Anti-Trinitarian writers are endeavoring to make on our minds. But the unrenewed heart is in great danger of falling in with such flesh-pleasing schemes; and on this account, it is highly necessary to administer the most powerful antidotes against the poison. There is no hope of awakening the human mind, while any Anti-Trinitarian impressions remain on it. That doctrine is the most fatal anodyne that can possibly be administered to immortal souls, laboring under the disease of sin. The reasonings of such divines "on righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come," are by no means such as to make sinners tremble. Your own observations, my hearers, must have convinced you of this, independently of my arguments on the subject. You have nothing to do but to open your eyes, to see the deep moral sleep into which that theory lulls the souls of men. This argument is sufficient to silence all

their specious reasonings against Trinitarian principles. Their fine-spun criticisms on the Sacred Volume; only serve to fold their own hands in the slumbers of death. May the Lord preserve us from the contagious lethargy, and awaken them from their pleasing but fatal delusion. AMEN.

SERMON XIX.

GALATIANS 4. 17.

They zealously affect you, but not well.

The evils into which the Anti-Trinitarian doctrines lead mankind, have been illustrated in eight particulars. It is necessary to recapitulate them, to proceed intelligibly with subsequent observations. It has been shown, that the theory in question leads those who receive it, to treat the Holy Scriptures with an unbecoming freedom ; to deny many of their doctrines, and to believe but few ; to have wrong conceptions of the Divine character, and the character of men ; to have low conceptions of Christ's character and work ; to treat Him with great indifference ; to disesteem the Orthodox, and oppose them in all their operations ; to overlook the momentous concerns of their own souls ; and to consider sin rather a misfortune than a crime. In proceeding with the subject, it may be observed,

9. That the system in question leads those who adopt it, to have little concern about the salvation of others. As to the wicked who are advanced in life, Dr. Priestley views their situation as being entirely hopeless. He says, "All late repentance, and especially after long and confirmed habits of vice, is altogether and necessarily ineffectual ; there not being sufficient time left to produce a

change of disposition and character, which can only be done by a change of conduct, and of proportionally long continuance." This unhappy class of sinners, on Anti-Trinitarian principles, must, of course, be given up to eternal annihilation, or to the torments of hell, after death, for a limited duration. There are, therefore, no sufficient motives to labor for their conversion. It would only be giving them unnecessary trouble; to address them with divine threatenings, or to exhibit promises which can have no application to their ruined case. How far the Anti-Trinitarians in general agree with their file-leader in this matter, I am not prepared to affirm. It appears, however, with great clearness, that they are all very careful not to disturb the repose of the wicked. In beholding their slumbers, they neither weep nor pray.

The Anti-Trinitarian doctrine has been preached in this town for a series of years, and with a considerable degree of zeal and talents. If it is calculated to alarm and convert sinners, you must, no doubt, have seen these glorious fruits of it. But, alas! the teachers of that system are not in the habit of saying to their hearers, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." 2 Cor. 5. 20. You have never seen, my hearers, poor distressed sinners saying to the preachers, or professors of that denomination, "Men and brethren, What shall we do to be saved?" It appears to be their grand object, to persuade men of the truth of the Anti-Trinitarian system, and guard them against Trinitarian idolatry, instead of alarming their fears with the infinite evil of sin, or the danger of eternal punishment. Under such instructions as these, sinners are not impressed with the sense of their total depravity; nor are they led to see the necessity of obtaining *a new heart*, to be obedient to God and prepared

for heaven. They find it difficult, however, to convince many of the wicked, that their doctrines are Scriptural; but if they could only effect this, they would never see, in such people, any opposition of heart to Anti-Trinitarianism. If they can only change people's doctrinal views, they seem to be perfectly indifferent as to their present life, or future safety. In relation to this matter, Dr. Fuller says, "Were any of their hearers, by any means, to feel pricked in their hearts, and come to them with the question, "What shall we do?" would they not pity them as enthusiasts, and be ready to suspect that they had been among the Calvinists? If any counsel were given, would it not be such as should tend to impede their repentance rather than promote it? and instead of directing them to Jesus Christ, would they not endeavor to lead them into another course?" He adds, "Socinian writers cannot so much as *pretend*, that their doctrine has been used to convert profligate sinners to the love of God and holiness."

Trying to remove these difficulties, they have felt themselves under the necessity of mentioning the effects of the Apostles' preaching; which is completely begging the point in controversy. In this miserable manner, Dr. Tolman has *pretended* to refute the powerful letters of Dr. Fuller on the moral tendency of the Anti-Trinitarian principles. In reasoning from analogy, we may conclude with the utmost safety, that there never will be a religious revival under Anti-Trinitarian preaching, down to the end of time. Such an event would disappoint the teachers themselves, and serve to convince them of the fallacy of their own system.

While Dr. Scott continued to preach on that plan, his own mind was at rest; and his hearers slept under the soothing sound of his eloquence; but when he became more evangelical, they came to him with the solemn ques-

tion, "What shall we do to be saved?" While he was an Anti-Trinitarian, he had no concern for the salvation of his people; but after changing his sentiments, he manifested great anxiety on that subject; and his preaching and writings became extensively useful. You may see the propriety of these remarks, by consulting his publication, called, "The force of truth."

The Anti-Trinitarians appear to be greatly engaged in spreading their doctrines where the gospel has been promulgated; but in respect to the heathen world, they seem to give themselves no trouble. Dr. Fuller says, "Let a single instance be produced, of a Socinian teacher having so much virtue or benevolence, as to venture among a race of barbarians, merely with the view to their conversion." In relation to this, one of that class says, "Far better is the light of nature as communicated to them by their Creator, than any light our officiousness disposes us to carry to them." This writer, undoubtedly, means, the light, or rather darkness, of Trinitarianism; but as the light of nature is so highly prized by the Anti-Trinitarians, they will not, of course, subject themselves to any great self-denial, to afford the heathen the light of their own doctrines. Alas! their scheme does not lead them to weep, when they see their fellow-creatures living as the enemies of the cross of Christ. In vain shall we look among them for such feelings towards perishing sinners, as were displayed by the Prophets and Apostles. With their present principles, they will never be disposed to say, "Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." 2 Cor. 5. 11. A belief of their system, and external morality, are all that they require as pre-requisites to salvation. Their extensive charity supercedes the necessity of warning sinners to "flee from the wrath to come." They seem to have no great fears about the future state of any part of mankind. Their

ardor in spreading their own views, appears to arise from opposition to evangelical doctrines, rather than from a desire to convert, or reform the world. It seems to irritate them, to be told, that the case of sinners is at all dangerous. The mercy of the God whom they adore, is so great as wholly to exclude vindictive justice.

Mr. Belsham says, "If God should mark and punish *every* instance of transgression, he must be a merciless tyrant ;" but if he had said, *any* "instance of transgression," it would not have been a very great departure from the Anti-Trinitarian system. It is not to be expected that they will take any great pains to effect the conversion of men, whose condemnation cannot take place, unless God should prove Himself to be *cruel*. It evidently appears to be the *tendency* of that system, to fortify the minds of sinners *against* God, instead of converting them to his service. It is not wonderful that the worst of sinners should feel perfectly easy, in hearing such deluding doctrines. It need not be proved that their scheme has such a baneful effect on the mind ; for the thing admits of no denial. In confirmation of this, my hearers, I have only to appeal to your own conscience and observation. Did you ever know of souls under conviction, repairing to such preachers for religious instruction ? Alas ! they know that it would be of very little use. But those who are determined to follow the course of this world, and at the same time, live in quietness of mind, will find in such instructors, all that they can possibly desire. This manifests, that the doctrine leads to sin and endless misery ; and therefore, it must be dreaded by all who suitably appreciate the worth of immortal souls. But,

10. The Anti-Trinitarian system leads those who embrace it, to neglect every branch of practical piety. By this, I mean the duties which we owe to God. Men may

sustain what is called a decent moral character, and yet be wholly deficient in relation to practical religion.

Dr. Fuller very justly says, "A decent conduct has been found in hypocrites, in infidels, and even in Atheists." It is said by Dr. Priestley himself, "That an Atheist may be temperate, good natured, honest, and in the less extended sense of the word, a virtuous man." Men, in general, have powerful inducements to observe the rules of common decency, let their religious sentiments be what they may. Practical godliness is of a higher nature, than merely to lead a decent life. In regard to the various duties of practical piety, our doctrinal principles must have a powerful influence.

Practical religion consists in pious conversation—in prayer—in praise—in a holy observance of the Christian sabbath—and in a regular observance of the public worship of God. If these duties are habitually neglected, there is no practical religion. If the Anti-Trinitarian doctrines promote these things, then they are favorable to practical religion; but if they do not, then they are unfavorable. Practical piety is a visible thing. In relation to the duties that have been mentioned, the practice of every denomination lies open to the inspection of the world. If the Anti-Trinitarians abound in *such* godliness, every insinuation to the contrary must be the effect of prejudice, malignity and slander. But it is a very general impression, that the people in view, are habitually deficient in all the solemn duties which have been mentioned. What all the Trinitarian writers have said on this subject, appears to be actually true, as far as I have been able to extend my observations. The thing, in fact, is so obvious, that their own authors have found themselves under the necessity of admitting it.

The Rev. J. Yates, the antagonist of Mr. Wardlaw, seems to have anticipated with some degree of pain, that

many of those people in Scotland, who would probably embrace the Anti-Trinitarian principles, would "be men more inclined to inquire after truth, than to apply it steadily to practice when found." His fears seem to have been great, lest this should operate against the triumphs of the cause in that nation.

It is expressly acknowledged by Dr. Priestley, that "a great number of the Unitarians," as he calls them, "of the present age, are only men of good sense, and without much practical religion; and that there is a greater apparent conformity to the world in them, than is observable in others."

Mr. Belsham also says, that "Rational Christians are often represented as indifferent to practical religion." Neither does he appear to deny the justness of the charge; but he endeavors to account for it, in a consistency with the truth and purity of their doctrines. Dr. Priestley does the same.

The writers of that school freely acknowledge, that practical Christians are not in a favorable situation to become Anti-Trinitarians. Dr. Priestley says, "Many of those who judge so truly concerning particular tenets in religion, have attained to that cool, unbiassed temper of mind, in consequence of becoming more indifferent to religion in general, and to all the modes and doctrines of it." Mr. Belsham concurs in this opinion, by saying, "Men who are the most indifferent to the *practice* of religion, will ever be the *first* to see the absurdity of a popular superstition, and to embrace a rational system of faith." These concessions very fully prove the point which I am endeavoring to prove and illustrate. These champions of Anti-Trinitarianism, you see, have unequivocally admitted, that an entire absence of religion is the best preparative for a conversion to their cause. Such irreligious characters

would not be willing to embrace the system, if they thought it at all favorable to practical piety. Seeing the point under consideration is allowed by the most able and zealous men of that party, and its truth is so obvious to all, we cannot be justly blamed for mentioning the thing—a thing on their part explicitly acknowledged.

Anti-Trinitarianism was very early planted in this town. It has spread to a considerable extent ; and, therefore, you have had a fair opportunity to witness its practical effects on the hearts and lives of its admirers. As men, as neighbors, as members of society, they are, in general, very respectable ; but I have not been able to discover in them much of that, which properly falls under the definition of practical religion. But if they are, in general, in the habit of conversing on solemn subjects in a serious manner ; if they abound much in prayer and in praise ; if they are strict observers of the holy Sabbath ; if their attention to public worship is general and unremitting ; these things must have fallen under your observation ; and, of course, my remarks can have but little influence on your opinion. If their system were truly evangelical, it would, undoubtedly, produce these effects in some degree. But where these virtues are not found, there can be no religion in the heart. We must take these things into view, in forming a judgment concerning the expediency of embracing or rejecting that theory. From the statements of *our* writers, the concessions of *theirs*, and our *own* observations, we may be now prepared to decide on the question. If Anti-Trinitarian doctrine is not productive of practical piety, we must conclude that it is not the Gospel of Christ. On the tendency of that plan, as it relates to public worship, Dr. Fuller says, “ Where the Socinian and Arian doctrines have been taught, the congregations are gradually dwindling away, and there are scarcely a sufficient number left to keep

up the form of public worship." He says further, "There is nothing in either of these systems that alarms the heart; and, therefore, the congregations where they are taught, unless kept up by the accidental popularity of a preacher, or some other circumstance distinct from the doctrine delivered, generally fall into decay." We are constantly witnessing, my hearers, similar effects of that scheme, in relation to public and family worship. Its effects, as to inward devotion, the judgment day must declare. As sufficient has been said to sustain the point in hand, we may proceed to an

IMPROVEMENT.

1. From what has been said on this subject, we may see, that we have no inducement to change our present principles for Anti-Trinitarianism. That people, we know, choose to be distinguished from other denominations, by the name of Unitarians; but to that distinctive appellation, they have no exclusive right. The import of it is, believers in one God; but the name as justly belongs to us as to them. The difference between us has no reference to the number of Gods; but to the *manner* of the Divine Existence. As to the Unity of God, we have no disagreement with them. They, however, seem to labor greatly to make a different impression on the minds of the less informed part of men. When they have proved that there is but *one God*, and that Jesus Christ is *a man*, they appear to triumph—to take it for granted that we are confuted! But, to think of maintaining their cause, by proving points that we not only admit but vindicate, amounts to nothing but the blinding of the uninformed. Let them prove that there is no *Personality* in the Essence or nature of JEHOVAH, and that the Son and the Holy Ghost have no proper claim to *Supreme Divinity*, and then they will effect something to their purpose. But to think of

proving these things from the Scriptures, has always appeared to me as an idle undertaking. We are willing to admit, that people who *dare* to attempt this, are by no means deficient in courage. It is very necessary that they should be highly accomplished in critical learning; and that they should possess the art of evasion to a great degree.

In reviewing the subject, I think we may rest satisfied that Anti-Trinitarian doctrines are unscriptural—not adapted to the case of mankind—not of a very animating moral tendency—and can never commend themselves to the consciences of men, nor to the approbation of God. They will never satisfy the mind that has a proper sense of the Divine character—of the infinite evil of sin, and man's desert of eternal punishment.

An inspired writer says, "Salvation is not of works; lest any man should boast;" Eph. 2. 9; but in direct opposition to this, an Anti-Trinitarian writer says, "All hopes founded on any thing else than *a good moral life*, are merely imaginary, and contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel. The absolute manner in which they contradict the decided testimony of the Holy Scriptures, is truly surprising. But sufficient specimens of this have been exhibited, in the preceding sermons on this interesting controversy.

2. From what has been said on this subject, we may see, that the radical errors, held by our opponents, are wholly inconsistent with the Christian name. This point has been fully established by the Rev. R. Wordlaw, and Dr. Fuller. The views of the Anti-Trinitarians, of Christ and the Scriptures, differ but very little from the conceptions of the Deists and Mahomedans.* But as Christ is

* In the war against Christianity, the French infidels considered the Socinians as their worthy allies. They knew that Socinianism led directly to Deism; and that, in fact, many of those persons who called themselves Socinians, were already Deists. Hence, Voltaire says to the King of Prussia, on

really the *Supreme God*, He can never acknowledge that class of men to be His disciples, whose system reduces Him to the humble level of *a mere man*. Neither can *we*, while we retain our belief of His proper Divinity, acknowledge that people to be our brethren in the Lord, who openly deny the doctrine—deny that, which forms the very glory of his character. We hold it to be utterly impossible, for any real Christian to maintain such principles. It is taking away the very foundation stone on which Zion is erected. I am not afraid to say, that there is not one in a thousand, of the Orthodox, who would differ with me in this opinion. Wherefore then, should I be thought peculiarly rigid, in this plain, but honest declaration? I am no more censorious in this case, than all the ministers and members of our churches are, who fully believe in the Trinitarian doctrines. Anti-Trinitarianism has been considered as a grand heresy, by the Orthodox, in every age. I have been informed, that Dr. Mason of New-York, in his plea for open communion, among the different Christian denominations, has entirely excluded them.

Notwithstanding the errors, into which, we believe the Catholic Church to have fallen, she has not so completely departed from the faith, as those, who glory in calling themselves Unitarians. She admits the Trinity in Unity—the Deity of Christ—His Atonement, and the sanctifying operations of the Holy Ghost. As she has not entirely overturned the foundation of the Christian hope, no doubt, many of her members, in all ages, have been the

the 8th Nov. 1773, "What vexes me, is, that you do not establish a Socinian church, after having appointed several for the Jesuits. There are Socinians still to be met with in Poland; they swarm in England; and we have some of them in Switzerland. Julian would certainly have favored them. They hate that which he hated; they despise that which he despised; and they, like him, are worthy men." See *Arminian and Methodist Magazine*, page #34. [Communicated by a friend.]

sons of God. I have read of some in that church, whose piety has appeared to be pure and eminent. Some stars have always shone in that horizon; notwithstanding the clouds, with which it has been obscured. Names might be mentioned, if it were necessary, which have reflected honor on the Christian cause.

It is not my desire to be considered as an apologist for the church of Rome; but merely to show, that it is *possible* for real Christians to subsist in that communion; while, I can see no ground, on which, to form such an opinion in favor of the Anti-Trinitarians. This is my judgment expressed without the least unkind feelings, to the Anti-Trinitarian denomination. Nothing is further from my heart, than a wish, wantonly to wound the feelings of any of my fellow-creatures. If I could be kind to them, and faithful to the cause of Christ, without expressing an opinion on the subject, that method would be readily adopted. This frank and solemn declaration will, in all probability, not be believed by them; and therefore, the matter must be submitted to the day of judgment. Every unkind expression of their's, I hope cheerfully to forgive; and I desire, if I know my own heart, their best interest in time and eternity. Their feelings and mine, are known to God, at whose bar, an account must be given of all our ways.

In relation to the Universalists, whose case has been mentioned, they stand on the same footing with the Anti-Trinitarians, as to piety. That class of them who are on the plan of a limited future punishment, differ but very little from the Anti-Trinitarians, except in the name which they have assumed. The other class of Universalians, differ from them both, as to the Person and Atonement of Christ; but they manifest great opposition of heart to the execution of divine justice, in respect to those who appear to die in sin. Their case, as to true religion, is something doubtful, to

say the least of it. We have no right to consider any of these denominations, as the Churches of Christ: nor any of their members, as born of the Spirit. No other sect of professing Christians, that I know of, have so completely departed from the faith.

3. From what has been said on this subject, we see the importance of guarding against doctrines, which subvert the Christian system. Every possible step should be taken, that appears to be adapted to preserve our families and fellow-men, from such contagious principles; and we should also strive to reclaim those who are ensnared by them, in the spirit of meekness. As to this matter, St. Paul says, "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as *thyself*," certainly includes them, on whose sentiments these animadversions have been made. A faithful exhibition of divine truth, is the best token of real friendship. To say, that no sentiments are dangerous, if sincerely believed, is contrary to these inspired words, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." 1 John 4. 1. Our Lord saith of them, "If it were possible they would deceive the very elect." Matth. 24. 24. The only ground of hope is, the preserving care of God—that he can "recover those out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will." 2 Tim. 2. 26. He hath a mighty arm; and his grace is rich and free.

In closing the subject, I would just remark, that I have pursued it, more from a conviction of duty, than a desire of controversy; for the very foundation of our hope is in-

volved in the doctrines which have been contested. The debate commenced on the authenticity of a single passage : but it is the doctrine contained in it, that engaged the opposition of the gentleman on the other side, and called from me the discourses which you have heard. The whole is now submitted to your candid judgment, and the divine blessing.

“ Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good ;” so
“ an abundant entrance shall be administered unto you,
into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
AMEN.

or His works, independently of Divine Revelation. As there are mysteries in the visible world which transcend our comprehension, we are not prepared to pronounce, with any degree of certainty, what is *possible* or *impossible*, in relation to the existence and operations of spirit. Men of science know many things to be true, which children consider as impossibilities ; and the capacities of such men are less in comparison with higher intelligences, than children's minds are to theirs. If matter and spirit cannot be combined in a single being, it is a thing only known to God ; and, therefore, we have no right to assume the opinion of its being an absurdity, unless it is said so to be by Him who knoweth all things. To think of deciding on a point of this nature by our feeble reason, is surely more than wild. It is like an attempt to span the heavens, or to comprehend the ocean in the hollow of our hand ! The specious reasoning of the philosophic Priestley, on this subject, is of no more value than the opinion of the weakest man on earth. If we had nothing to guide us in this case, but the mere light of nature, his arguments might deserve some attention. With all the plausibility of such arguments, that philosophy is denied by many, on the ground of abstract reasoning. But no one can prove the impossibility of a thing which is made absolutely certain. That this is the case in relation to the immateriality of the soul, will be made, we hope, to appear.

2. The theory of man's materiality, is discarded by men whose science is not inferior to that of Dr. Joseph Priestley. Many distinguished philosophers, ancient and modern, have vindicated, on the ground of reason, the separate existence and immortality of the soul. When the Doctor thought that he had established the position, that *matter* may be so modified as to perform all the operations of mind, he draws the conclusion, that the addition of an im-

material spirit would be an unnecessary appendage ; that sound philosophy forbids the assigning of more causes than are necessary to produce an effect. But his grand position, that matter may be so modified as to perform the operations of mind, is denied ; and he has no right to take a thing for granted, that requires proof. Unless the premises are established, the conclusions arising from them have no weight. The entire materiality of man, would be a proof of his complete *mortality*, and evince the impossibility of his having any consciousness after death. But if the soul is immaterial and distinct from the body, then he may, in that part of his nature, exist in a separate state. Believers in the immortality of the soul, universally consider it as a thing wholly distinct from matter.

In fact, if mental operations are nothing but the result of material organization, it will go far in proving that no spirits exist in the universe. On that principle, God Himself must be a material Being ; and that would establish at once the Atheistical doctrine, that God is every thing, and every thing is God. This ground, therefore, must be taken in the argument, that matter, in whatever way it may be modified, cannot perform the operations of an intelligent being. No ; reason is a power too vast and sublime, to have no other essence but corporality ! Mere earth, however curiously modified it might be, could never soar above its own nature and origin ; but the soul of man thirsts after immortality. Some of the learned heathen have reasoned admirably on the point in question ; and have defended, with consummate ability, the immortality of the human mind. This was the case of the learned and penetrating Plato. When the celebrated Cato was just about to commit the detestable act of suicide, the historic page says, that he held Plato's philosophy in the one hand, and the fatal sword in the other. Looking at the

sword, he says, "This will put an end to my life;" but viewing the book, he cries, "That assures me that I shall never die!" He then pronounced, with emphasis, "It must be so, Plato, thou reasonest well; else, why this pleasing hope, this fond desire, this longing after immortality?" Many scholars, more acute, more deeply versed in science, than Dr. Priestley, have opposed the theory of the soul's materiality; and have defended the opposite hypothesis, with arguments more numerous and powerful than he has adduced in favor of his philosophy. From these considerations we may conclude, that the thing is not only *possible*, but highly *probable*, on the mere ground of reason. Even on philosophical principles, we may entertain more elevated views of man, than that of being only a material and mortal creature. If that were really true, we might, with great propriety, hesitate concerning his existing any more after death. The doctrine of materialism is such a near approximation to Atheism, that it cannot be viewed without the deepest horror. The Anti-Trinitarians say, indeed, that there will be a resurrection; but another sect may soon arise in that school, informing the world, that the passages which support that doctrine are all interpolations and corrupt readings, and form no part of the original Scriptures. In doing so, they will not be more heretical in respect to them, than they themselves are now in relation to us.

3. The general opinion of mankind has always been in opposition to the materiality and consequent mortality of man. Selecting that part of men who have enjoyed the Scriptures, the principle in question has not been believed by one of a hundred. There was a small sect among the Jews, who said, "There is no resurrection, neither angels nor spirits;" and in the Christian church, there have, in various ages, been a few of such an infidel turn of thinking.

It must be allowed, we grant, that truth is not always on the side of the multitude ; but a point which few have ever believed, should be thoroughly examined before it is adopted as an article of our creed. There is a strong bias in the minds of some people, to adopt any theory that is *new*, when exhibited by a popular character ; and many others are highly tenacious of doctrines which have *antiquity* in their favor. . These extremes are equally dangerous ; and to run into either of them, is an indication of a weak and injudicious mind.

But with regard to the overwhelming number who have always been in the belief of the soul's immortality, it is proper to remark, that they have not been the rabble, the unthinking, the uninformed, nor the vicious. If such people have believed the doctrine, it has been through the influence of the enlightened and virtuous. Yes ; those who have given weight and currency to this belief, in general, have been men who have made religion their serious object ; men, whose character, candor, learning, natural abilities, patient investigation, and apparent piety, have entitled them to respect ; and, therefore, their opinions claim our deference. Not to admit this fact as being an argument in favor of the point in question, is an evidence of a mind wedded to its own notions.

The heathen world, in general, have always had some crude ideas of this doctrine. But being destitute of the Scriptures, they have never had any knowledge of the resurrection ; yet they have had some expectations of future rewards and punishments ; and that is a manifestation of their belief in the immateriality and incorruptibility of the soul. If the principle is as contrary to Scripture and reason, as Dr. Priestley pretends, how came it to prevail over all the earth, and in all ages ?”

The immortality of the soul, and the being of God,

were, undoubtedly, revealed to man at the creation; and some faint impressions of these things have remained on their minds, through all the past generations. When such impressions are once made, they are not very easily removed.

Dr. Priestley considers it as an argument in his favor, that the ancients, in speaking of the soul as being distinct from the body, have, notwithstanding, always spoken of it as being, in some sense, a material substance. This, undoubtedly, arose from their intimate acquaintance with matter, and the necessary obscurity of their ideas, in relation to the nature, or essence of a spirit. In condescension to our senses, God speaks of Himself in the Scriptures, as if He were a material Being. He is said to have hands, eyes, ears, and such properties about Him, as would, in some measure, convey the idea of corporality. But to suppose that He is not a pure and immaterial Essence, would argue the highest degree of mental imbecility.

When Dr. Priestley speaks of spirit, he resolves it into *mere matter*, and when he treats on matter, it all appears to be resolved into that which is merely *ideal*. In one word, his whole system seems to be scepticism. It must be allowed, that our knowledge of the real essence, either of matter or spirit, is very obscure; but from their separate properties, we may infer their existence, and widely different natures.

I am willing to admit, however, that all the evidence that has been mentioned in favor of the separate existence of the soul, and its immortality, is wholly insufficient to settle the question. But there is certainly as much of that kind of evidence to which Dr. Priestley resorts, against him, as there is in his favor; and many able reasoners would say, much more. He has, indeed, resorted to the Scriptures, for the defence and illustration of his principles. But it

is a singular appeal, and it is curiously conducted by this philosophic Doctor. He refers to such passages only, as are indefinite in their import ;—and, therefore, being equivocal, he has given them a plausible construction—the appearance of being in his favor. As for those passages which are definite, and manifestly against his scheme, he does not even deign to mention them. He settles *them* at one bold stroke ;—namely, That the Bible is so interlarded with foreign matter, that no reliance can be placed on it, until it is criticised, and purified by giants, like himself, in Biblical literature. In a word, he seems to consider his own plan as being absolutely settled on philosophical principles ; and, of course, those parts of Scripture which hold an opposite language, must have been *corrupted*. His own philosophy, therefore, is with him the standard, and the Scriptures must bow to its decisions. But seeing philosophers against philosophers—learned men against learned men—critics against critics, we must resort to the Scriptures as our only safe guide, in the investigation of this subject ; believing that they are not corrupted, and that they are fully adequate to settle the momentous question. Therefore,

4. We shall proceed to collect evidence from them, in favor of the proposition which was deduced from the text ; namely, that men possess an immaterial spirit, which is immortal, and distinct from the body. It is, we acknowledge, but an obscure idea that we can have of the essence, or substance of a spirit ; but we may understand its properties, and perceive their difference from the properties of matter. If man is nothing but a material substance, so modified as to be capable of intellectual operations ; it must follow, that the Divine Spirit can effect no change in his moral character, only by the exhibition of motives, or an alteration in the texture, or organization of his frame. The opinion in question

is therefore, at war with the doctrine of regeneration, as it is taught in the Scriptures. If all the passages which teach the Trinity in Unity—the Deity of Christ—his Atonement—the Personality and Deity of the Holy Ghost—the entire depravity of man—the immateriality and immortality of the soul—the doctrine of regeneration, &c. are forgeries, our Bible must be so completely corrupted, that it is now of no real value. But it is sufficient for us, that the Bible teaches all the doctrines that have been mentioned. We are there taught, that the soul and body are distinct in essence, and that they constitute a single complex person. It is nothing less than infidelity, to deviate in the least degree from this view of the subject.

By the immateriality of the soul, we mean, that it is a substance, to us unknown, wholly different from that which is material. It is a substance, in distinction from non-entity; and it is called a spirit in contradistinction from unconscious matter. This difference is clearly marked in our text—namely, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.” If these words are not spurious—and I know of no such charge against them—they establish the soul’s immortality and separate existence. But this doctrine is strongly corroborated by many other sacred passages. Some that are most clear and forcible, will now be selected. Every passage that speaks of the soul as being immortal, and existing in a separate state, proves that it is a substance differing from mere matter, whatever that substance may be, and whether we have or have not a correct conception of that essence or nature. As people have such a strong propensity to evade the force of words, and to give them a construction foreign to their proper import, no texts will be adduced, but such as are perfectly unequivocal.

The passage which is chosen for the foundation of this

subject, is evidently of this kind. In relation to the material part, Solomon says, that man has but little pre-eminence over the brutal creation; as they "all go to one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." Eccl. 3. 20. But as to the other part of our nature, he tells us, that the difference is vast between us and the brutes—they being mortal, and we immortal. He says, "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of a beast that goeth downward to the earth." Verse 21. His words clearly shew, that the nature of these different spirits is beyond our comprehension; but that the one is immortal and the other not—that the one is accountable to God, the other has no concern in future responsibility. These two passages are sufficient alone, to upset the whole of Dr. Priestley's theory, and every argument on which it is founded.

In reference to this doctrine, Elihu says to Job, "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." Job 32. 8. In perfect harmony with this grand sentiment, the prophet Zechariah says, "The Lord stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him." Zech. 12. 1. These passages are incontestible proofs, that the spirit and body of man are distinct things. Say not like Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" when God hath assured us of their reality. But it is needless to multiply testimonies of this kind, for the Scriptures abound with them. We shall proceed, therefore, to advance some unequivocal passages in support of the soul's immortality, and existence between death and the resurrection. The first that will be mentioned, is that conclusive passage, recorded in Exodus 3. 6, where the Lord saith unto Moses, "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

Christ quoted this passage, to confute the infidelity of the Sadducees, in relation to the doctrine of the resurrection, and to establish the immortality of the soul. The conclusion which He drew from it, is irresistible ; namely, that those venerable Patriarchs were then in existence ; for Jehovah “ is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

But as the soul’s immortality is more clearly revealed in the New-Testament, we will resort to it for further light on the subject.

It is stated in the Old-Testament, that Moses died on “ the top of Pisgah ;” and that the Lord “ buried him in a valley in the land of Moab ;” yet, we are told by the Evangelist, that he appeared with Elias, or Elijah, on the mount, where our Saviour was so gloriously transfigured. It was, undoubtedly, the soul of Moses that appeared ; for his body was in the grave. His soul, therefore, existed separately, from his death, until that period. He appeared to possess intelligence, as really as the translated Elijah ; and was equally capable of conversing with Christ, on the subject of the sufferings which were before Him, with all the glorious and eternal consequences of them. It must be allowed, therefore, that Moses exists now, in the most noble part of his nature. As he is evidently dead, and yet existing in a separate state, the immortality of the soul is fully established. Some collateral testimony, however, will be added to this argument.

When the pious Stephen was expiring under the hands of his enemies, he prayed thus, “ Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Acts 7. 59. This is a manifestation, that he did not believe himself to consist of nothing but matter ; nor that he was falling asleep, to wake no more, until the resurrection. His prayer was, undoubtedly, heard ; and it is recorded by inspiration, to convince men of their immortality, as it respects the soul.

The case mentioned by our Lord, of the rich man and Lazarus, is decisive evidence of the soul's immortality. He says, that Lazarus "died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom:"—adding, "The rich man also died, and was buried: and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." Luke 16. 32, 33. On the hypothesis under consideration, this statement must be incorrect; for if neither the rich man nor Lazarus had souls, in distinction from their bodies, the one is not in happiness, nor the other in misery—they are both sleeping in the grave in equal peace. The question to be settled, is simply this, Which is the standard, Dr. Priestley's theory of matter and spirit, or the Holy Scriptures? According to Priestley, the rich man and Lazarus have no consciousness of any thing at present; but according to the Scriptures, the one is in heaven, and the other in hell! It is surely to be lamented, that this pre-eminent philosopher had not lived in the days of Jesus Christ, that he might have given Him the important information, that intelligence is only a property of matter duly organized, and that after death there can be no consciousness, until the resurrection!!! It certainly appears that Christ was a believer in the unphilosophical doctrine of the soul's immortality; for when the dying thief said to Him on the cross, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," He replied, "Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Luke 23. 42, 43. There is no need of saying any thing on the *weight* of this testimony; for the subject is perfectly clear, unless Dr. Priestley knows more about man, than the God who created him!

In this view of things, I think, that if any of my hearers are still disposed to lean to that system, which is called Unitarianism, their credulity must be great! My

heart sickens at the thought of being laid under the necessity of making these remarks. But as Providence has placed me where such heretical doctrines are inculcated, your preservation from them, requires that plainness which is painful to my feelings. In pursuing the argument,

It may be further observed, that St. Paul, who was a man of great natural abilities—a consummate scholar, and inspired of God, believed fully in the immortality of the soul, and in its separate existence from the body. It was on this ground he said to the Philippians; “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.—I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.” Phil. 1. 21—24. In another epistle he says, “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we who are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.—Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord—for we walk by faith, not by sight; we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” 2 Cor. 5. 1.—6. In his epistle to the Hebrews, he speaks of “the spirits of just men made perfect.” Heb. 12. 23. St. Paul, therefore, was not initiated into the Priestleyan philosophy, concerning the entire materiality of man, and his complete mortality between death and the resurrection. This depth in science was not fathomed in the age of inspiration! The sun of philosophy had not risen then

above the moral horizon, so as to dispel the mist of inspiration, and illuminate the human mind!

It seems that the apostle Peter, was in the same darkness, in which his brother Paul was involved; for he says to the churches, "I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by way of remembrance; knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me." 2. Pet. 1. 13, 14. The harmony of these apostles, on the immortality of the soul, is great; and their expressions about it are so clear, that no comment is necessary.

The account which St. John gives of the glorified souls of the ancient martyrs, is an additional testimony to the doctrine in question. I shall rest the argument on what has been said, being fully satisfied, that the candid enquirer must be convinced. This sublime and interesting subject will be improved in the next discourse. May God bless the word of eternal truth. AMEN.

SERMON XXI.



ECCLESIASTES XII. 7.

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was : and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.



In the former discourse, on these words, the object was to support and illustrate this proposition ; namely,
THAT MEN POSSESS AN IMMATERIAL AND IMMORTAL SOUL, DISTINCT FROM THE BODY.

It has been very clearly shown, that the soul of man is capable of existing separately from the body ; and that it can exist in union with it, forming a complex person. On philosophical principles, we have seen, that there is as much, if not more, evidence in favor of this doctrine, than can be exhibited in defence of the opposite theory : and that in the word of God, the subject is completely settled. There is no room, therefore, to doubt, unless our minds are prepared to reject all revealed religion. Such a fatal stand is not yet, I sincerely hope, taken by any one of this respectable congregation.

In conformity to a previous promise, I must now close the subject with an

IMPROVEMENT.

I. If it has been proved that we possess immaterial and immortal souls, we must have a more exalted idea of man.

than we can have on the theory of his entire materiality. According to that, we are nothing but earth; and of course we must be altogether sensual in our affections. Nor can we be consistently blamed for not searing in our thoughts above the level of our own nature and origin. The system of materialism, lays man very low; much lower, perhaps, than the brutal creation. It can hardly be thought that *mere matter* would be capable of their operation and sagacity. It cannot be easily doubted, but that they possess an immaterial spirit, as well as man. It is thought by some, that it is immortal; and that the beasts will have a place assigned to them in another world, suited to their natures and capacities. But, perhaps, this is vibrating to the opposite extreme of materialism; and it may be equally incorrect. Neither of these theories appear to have the countenance of the Scriptures, which are our only guide on the subjects in question. He who formed the spirits of beasts, may annihilate them, whenever the purpose for which they were formed is answered. This seems to be the meaning of these inspired words, "Who knoweth—the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth." Eccl. 3. 21. The human soul possesses rationality, and, therefore, it is an accountable spirit. Hence JEHOVAH saith, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Ezek. 18. 4. Neither the threatenings of future punishment, nor the promises of glory to come, have any relation to the brutal creation—they have nothing to hope or fear after death. The case is very different with man. No scheme of doctrine which he may adopt, can wholly deliver his mind from the alarming anticipation of future misery for a sinful life. This is a strong evidence of his immortality and responsibility to God. The Scriptures invariably inculcate the doctrine of the soul's separate existence—of its being the most noble part of our nature.

When God formed the body of Adam, there was neither animal motion, nor the higher operations of intelligence, until He “breathed into him the breath of life;” and then it is expressly announced, that “man became a living soul.” The separate existence of the soul is a momentous consideration; and, therefore, the ancients in affirming any thing, did it with that solemn saying, “As thy soul liveth.” David, in apprizing Jonathan of the murderous intentions of Saul, his father, sanctions his declaration with these solemn words, “As the Lord liveth, and as thy *soul liveth*, there is but a step between me and death.” When the king of Judah swore unto Jeremiah, that he would not deliver him into the hands of the princes who sought his life, the oath is worded in this impressive manner—“As the Lord liveth, *that made us this soul*, I will not put thee to death, neither will I give thee into the hands of these men who seek thy life.” When Darius came to the lion’s den, into which Daniel had been cast, enquiring whether he was alive, that holy man replied, “O king, *live forever!*” This must have been an impetuous desire, if men cease to have any consciousness after death, until the resurrection. The import of Daniel’s saying, is this, undoubtedly; “O king, let thine happiness never cease;” but that must have been a fruitless wish, unless his soul was immortal.

The distinction between the soul and the body—the immortality and superior dignity of the spirit to the tabernacle of clay, are very clearly mentioned by our Lord, in Matth. 10. 28. In that passage, He saith, “Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” There is no need of saying any thing on the impertinence of this saying, on the scheme of materialism. Alas! for those who advocate it; they are al-

ways under the necessity of contending with the Oracles of God. But the principle under consideration, is further confirmed by the Great Teacher of men, in these solemn questions, namely: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matth. 16. 26. Possessing an immortal spirit, is the glory of man; it is that which gives him pre-eminence over all the other creatures on this globe. On this calculation, he may claim a kindred with the skies, as well as with the earth on which he treads; he may be considered as an incarnate angel. This glorious truth may truly excite man to respect himself, by acting at all times in conformity to the dignity of his nature. This magnanimity is perfectly compatible with exercising that humility required in the word of God.

2. If it has been proved that man has an *immaterial* and *immortal* soul, we may conclude that it is a doctrine whose practical tendency must be excellent. The whole divine system is "according to godliness;" but every capital error in theology, has a demoralizing tendency. But some, whose sentiments are heretical to a high degree, may be so much under the influence of other motives, as to pass through life with great external regularity; while some, who advocate sound doctrine, may "hold the truth in unrighteousness." These peculiar cases do not settle the practical effects of any scheme of theology. The question to be settled, is, What effect a system has on those who embrace it, in a general view? The doctrine of *mere materiality*, must have a destructive effect on the great mass of mankind, if it were universally believed. On that plan, men would have nothing to hope for, nor to fear, between death and the resurrection. All must lie in the grave, in an equally unconscious peace!

But when all the sacred passages are so construed, as to

mean nothing which relate to the immortality of the soul—happiness and misery in a separate state—to entertain *some doubt of those* which speak of a resurrection, will be both easy and natural. The adoption of one error paves the way for further advances ; and the end of the race is generally complete infidelity. The doctrine in question must give man such a low idea of his own nature and origin—such faint conceptions of a future responsibility, as greatly to check his ambition in the cultivation of his mind, and the correction of his manners.

We acknowledge, that some may be greatly refined in their intellectual powers, and very circumspect in their lives, with a full belief in the entire materiality of man ; but the scheme *itself* is by no means calculated to produce such an effect. Its advocates universally discard the doctrine of eternal punishment ; and, in general, they do not admit of *any* misery after death. Of course, all that is to be feared beyond the present life, for sin, is annihilation. This cannot be a very appalling consideration to those who are wholly opposed to holiness and heaven. As “the carnal mind is enmity against God,” to dwell forever in his presence, and to partake in the employment of holy beings, could not be a very pleasant anticipation. When sinners wish for heaven, it is because they think it is a place of happiness. They do not seem to consider their want of relish for that felicity, and, in fact, great aversion to it. They are greatly deceived in respect to themselves ; for if they were in heaven, with an unrenewed heart, they would wish for an immediate dismissal. As they cannot understandingly desire heaven—as they cannot always continue here—as hell is undesirable in a high degree—annihilation must be a consolation instead of a terror. It has been uniformly observed, that the doctrine of *materialism* has, in general, cut off all anxiety about religion,

and induced its votaries to pursue, without fear, the course of this world. Their own writers have always been compelled to acknowledge the great indifference of that denomination to practical religion. This has been clearly shown in the Sermons on Gal. 4. 17 ; and those who wish for further information on the subject, are referred to Dr. Fuller's letters on "the Calvinistic and Socinian systems compared." That system which is commonly called Orthodoxy, has always had the most powerful effect on the hearts and lives of men. In that, the immortality of the soul is admitted, and its entrance into happiness or misery immediately after death. It was with these things in view, that "Felix trembled ;" and they have a similar effect on many sinners now. In every congregation where the Trinitarian system is faithfully preached, some good effects of it clearly appear. "It is the power of God unto salvation," to thousands of mankind ; while the opposite scheme is obviously leaving its adherents "in the region and shadow of death," and has actually done so through all time. These conclusions are drawn from the divine testimony, and the experience of ages. I appeal to your conscience and observation, my hearers, for the truth of these remarks. In hearing of the soul's immortality, and the responsibility of men to God, you find it very difficult to sit as unconcerned spectators. You have found it, undoubtedly, at many times, to be a powerful check on your depraved inclination—preventing you from unlawful indulgences. So far the effect has been excellent. The preaching of this system has been the means of bringing *some* of you to the knowledge of God ; and we hope that it will, instrumentally, effect the salvation of many more in this congregation. "The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," when it is accompanied by the gracious operations of the Spirit.

We may appear with confidence, therefore, in the defence of this system ; glorying in its practical tendency—in its eternal consequences ; for it leads to heaven—to the presence of God.

3. If we possess an immortal soul, capable of existing *in* and *separate* from the body, then we may conclude, that opposition to the doctrine, is taking a criminal and dangerous stand. It is criminal, because there is no possibility of maintaining the ground without a departure from the letter and spirit of the Scriptures. The point in question, is as clearly settled there as the being of a God. It is not easy to see how it could have been stated with any greater clearness, than it is, in the Book of inspiration. In renouncing the belief of it, we must consider our own philosophy as being absolutely correct, and the only proper standard of decision in matters of this nature. But if philosophy must decide the momentous question, its voice is more against the resurrection of the body, than the immortality of the soul. Dr. Priestley has not, indeed, decided against *that*, but others *have*, whose acquisitions and pretensions have not been inferior to his. When the learned Greeks heard St. Paul preach on the resurrection of the dead, in the city of Athens, they treated the doctrine with the highest contempt. The language of human reason on this case, in all ages, has been, “How are the dead raised up? and with what bodies do they come?” These questions can no more be answered on the ground of reason, than the immateriality and immortality of the soul. In fact, philosophy has *much* to say on these points, but *nothing* in behalf of the resurrection. The difference is precisely this ; reason and Scripture combine, in teaching that the soul is distinct from the body—incorporeal in its essence, and eternal in its duration ; but the resurrection of the body, rests entirely on the testimony of the Bible. To

believe the latter and reject the former, is, therefore, not judging with, but *against* evidence.

In reasoning in favor of the materiality and consequent mortality of the soul, we must oppose a multitude of pre-eminent philosophers, as well as writers inspired by the Holy Ghost. On such accounts, we are warranted to decide against the material system. It requires the "magnanimity" of a Priestley, to think for a moment, of appearing in its defence. When he ventured to call what Moses says about the creation, "a lame account," the Anti-Trinitarian reviewers pronounced him a magnanimous writer. It is very "magnanimous," indeed, to take a stand against the Heavens! But we are not ashamed to say, that we dare not take such an elevated position. On the supposition that the material scheme is false, the crime of appearing in its defence is obvious. It is taking from the word of God. The crime of doing this is so great, that the LORD saith, that He shall take away the part of such an one from "the Book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this Book." Rev. 22. 19.

An avowal of the principle in question, is no less than doubting the knowledge and veracity of the Holy One of Israel—the God of the whole earth! If it is impossible that soul and body should be so united as to form one complex person; or that the spirit should exist independently of the body; then we must think that God does not know these things; or, that he has not adhered to the truth; for they are certainly contained in His word. To say, that the passages which mention these things, are either *insertions* or *mistranslations*, is a miserable retreat; for after criticising the Scriptures in the closest manner, that it can be fairly done, there will be abundant evidence left to support the soul's immortality.

tion of matter, and his astonishing intellect, the result of its peculiar modification? They, who can lend themselves to believe such learned and philosophic nonsense, are, surely, prepared to "swallow a camel!!" It is not improbable, that Dr. Priestley adopted the theory of materialism, to overthrow the Divinity and Atonement of Christ. In vain, however, "do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing." Great philosophers, with "the the rulers of the earth, may take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed—He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision—He shall speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in His sore displeasure." Psl. 2. 1—5. As to this matter, "if we are wise, we shall be wise for ourselves;" but if we will "sit in the seat of the scornful," we must expect to be "like the chaff which the wind driveth away." Psl. 1. 1, 4. "God is not mocked." No; He is infinitely jealous of His *truth*, and of His *glory*.

4. If we possess *immortal souls*, it will necessarily follow, that we should examine the subject with great care, that our minds may be settled in regard to its truth. It is wicked to permit ourselves to think, that God has left a matter of such vast importance without sufficient evidence—evidence within the reach of the weakest mind. To be settled in this case, nothing farther is necessary, than diligence and common honesty; for the ground on which it rests, is the testimony of God, and that is so clear, that he that runs may read and understand. "The way-faring man, though a fool," in respect to abstruse subjects, "need not err" in this case. In this enquiry, the Lord will guide the meek in judging of the nature and properties of the soul. It is not by human wisdom that a knowledge of the mysteries of the invisible world is acquired. Many people, of eminent abilities and learning, are whol-

ly unacquainted with the plainest doctrines of the Scriptures. Their ignorance of theology, arises from the blindness of their hearts. It is a great unhappiness to be unsettled in respect to the soul's immortality—it is wicked—a manifestation that they do not ask counsel of God. When people are placed under the influence of corrupting principles, their attention to the Scriptures should be more close and constant, and be accompanied with unceasing prayer.

Young people are, in a special manner, in imminent danger under the sound of a deluding ministry. Bad impressions are easily made on juvenile and inexperienced minds. An oblique remark, a sarcastic sneer, a contemptible pamphlet, may lay the foundation of their everlasting ruin. Great events frequently grow out of apparently small causes. Parents should, therefore, be peculiarly anxious about their children, and careful in having their understanding properly cultivated on religious subjects. If they neglect the matter, Satan and his emissaries will not be slack in taking the advantage of it. The hearts of children are, by nature, prepared to fall before their seductive arts! Sinful ways, and the doctrines which support them, are always pleasing, when the heart is not reconciled to God. We live in a dangerous world; and "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Those people are highly favored, who have been delivered from the bondage of moral corruption, and brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God; for their minds are now settled on all the grand truths of the gospel. This produces peace, joy, and hope.

5. If we possess an immortal soul, capable of existing separately from the body, it will follow, that its best interest claims our daily and strict attention. In general, much labor is bestowed to secure our welfare in the world;

but the soul is greatly neglected by the majority of mankind. Such a course of action is superlatively foolish. As to this, Christ saith, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" It will amount to very little, whether we have been rich or poor, honorable or despised in this life, when we shall have entered on the scenes of eternity. The joys of heaven, or the miseries of hell, will very soon make us overlook all that we shall have passed through on the earth. My dear hearers, eternity is a solemn and impressive subject! In the view of it, we may say with Moses, concerning sinners, "O that they were wise; that they understood this; that they would consider their latter end!" Eternal salvation and damnation, are really overwhelming considerations! They are calculated to rouse Christians to every possible exertion, and to awaken sinners from their moral sleep; for it will be but a short time, when we shall all be either in heaven or in hell! It is foolish and wicked beyond conception, to ruin our own souls! The highest eloquence is unequal to the illustration of this iniquity. Through divine mercy, we are now in a situation in which we may prepare to meet our God. O, let neither your Bibles, nor the Throne of Grace be neglected! "Behold, now is the accepted time! Behold, now is the day of salvation!" Even if some here are great sinners, and grown old in iniquity, there is forgiveness with God, through Jesus Christ, that his name may be feared. Seek ye the Lord, therefore, while He may be found, and your light shall rise in obscurity; and when your bodies are in the grave, your separate spirits shall shine like the sun in the kingdom of heaven. AMEN.

SERMON XXII.



MALACHI IV. 1.

Behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble ; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.



THIS passage is highly alarming to people whose minds are not reconciled to God. It is an allusion to the day of judgment ; but that is not the event to which it has a primary reference. The thing immediately intended, is the destruction of the Jewish nation, for their long and unparalleled wickedness, and especially for their rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory. It was about forty years after His ascension to heaven, that the event in view took place. It was effected by the Roman army, under Titus, who acted in the matter as the instrument of an avenging Providence.

On a careful perusal of the book of Malachi, you will be convinced that that was the event the Prophet had in view, when he wrote the text on whose investigation we have entered. The desolation which was brought upon Judea and the city of Jerusalem, is memorable, and a striking emblem of the final judgment. It was such a catastrophe in itself, and an emblem of such a momentous scene, as fully justifies these strong expressions : “ Behold,

the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble ; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” In respect to the destruction of the Jewish nation, Josephus writes, No other people ever suffered such calamities, and no other ever equalled them in wickedness. It was really a work of judgment, that makes the ear, in hearing of it, to tingle. The people fell beneath the Roman sword, like stubble fully dry, before the devouring flame. In consequence of that destruction, the Jews have been dispersed over the whole earth, for almost eighteen hundred years. When the Roman army appeared, the Christians who were in Jerusalem, remembered the words of Christ, fled from the devoted place, and were saved from the devouring sword. The storm fell on the proud—on the doers of wickedness—on those who, by actions or consent, had been guilty of the crucifixion of Christ. The event which has been mentioned, however, was but a faint shadow of the general judgment. On that day, the righteous shall escape, and the wicked shall be consumed. Surely, it shall burn as an oven—the wicked be as stubble—they shall be burned up—not having root or branch left. The phraseology of the text, however, is such, that some people have drawn from it the inconsistent inference, that finally impenitent sinners shall all be annihilated at the grand consummation. Considering the inference to be inadmissible, we shall endeavor to show,

I. The import of annihilation ; with some of the reasons on which the advocates of the doctrine think it is supported ; and,

II. Attempt to confute the scheme by Scriptural arguments.

We are to show,

I. The import of annihilation ; with some reasons on which the advocates of the doctrine think it is supported.

Annihilation, literally and properly signifies a return to that state of non-entity from which all things originally came. In that condition, there would be no more consciousness, no more joy, no more fear, no more sorrow, no more hope. If we have not an immaterial and immortal spirit, distinct from the body, but now connected with it, it will necessarily follow, that all mankind must be in a state of mental annihilation, between death and the resurrection. Whether the body returns to non-entity, or not, is a thing of no importance in relation to the present question. When once the supposed operations of its organization are suspended by death, all knowledge of existence must cease, until the dust shall be reorganized by the power of the Creator. I have an impression, that those who believe in the annihilation of the wicked, think that they shall not be raised from the dead. But whether the matter of which their bodies are composed, shall, in their opinion, be annihilated or not, I have not been able to learn. This circumstance, however, is of no importance. If thought eternally ceases to be a modification of the matter of which they are now composed, they may be said, to all important purposes, to be annihilated. But sufficient has been said to explain the point in question ; for by annihilation, they undoubtedly mean, that the wicked shall be so far put out of being, as neither to suffer nor enjoy any more. We shall, therefore, proceed in showing some of the reasons on which the advocates of annihilation think it is supported. And,

1. It is highly probable, that a conviction of the unfitness of impenitent sinners for the pure enjoyments of the heavenly world, is one reason for this conclusion. Such an inference is, by no means, incorrect ; for it is declared

in the Scriptures, that unsanctified people shall not inherit the kingdom of God. As to this point, the Anti-Trinitarians differ from every class of the Universalists. One class of that general denomination, profess to believe, that all mankind are so interested in the Atonement of Christ, that they shall ascend immediately to heaven after death. The other, however, seem to think there will be a limited punishment inflicted on obstinate sinners; and that, by enduring it, they will atone for their guilt, be purified from sin, and, in some period of eternity, be admitted to final happiness. But it is certainly more reasonable, and congenial with the declarations of Scripture, to believe, that those who die in opposition to God, shall rather be annihilated than received to heaven. We concur with them so far as to believe, that such people cannot be admitted into heaven; but that which seems to be a reason in their minds for annihilation, leads us to believe in their eternal punishment.

2. Opposition to the doctrine of endless misery, is, no doubt, another reason which leads them to the belief of annihilation. While they admit that such sinners as have been mentioned, are unfit for heaven, they seem to be unwilling to allow that they shall be sent to a place of eternal pain. They contend, that the eternal continuance of sin and misery is inconsistent with the infinite benevolence of God. This argument is more plausible than solid; it is calculated, however, to affect the feelings of men who are opposed to every thing that is contrary to a selfish inclination. But the inference from the benevolence of Deity, that all sin and sorrow shall come to an everlasting end, is rather hastily drawn. If the argument has any force in it, it militates as powerfully against the existence of these things now, as it does against their continuance. The infinite goodness of God cannot be consistently doubted;

yet these evils *have* existed in all ages ; and we are authentically informed, that they are to be continued, in some degree, down to the end of time. If sin and sorrow are continued through the course of seven thousand years, under the government of God, we have no ground to conclude that the eternal continuance of these evils may not be perfectly consistent with infinite wisdom and benevolence. The argument of the opposer is this, Wherefore should God make creatures, and determine that they should sin and suffer forever ? But to this we may reply, Why should God make creatures, permit them to sin, and cause them to suffer in this world, and at death annihilate them to all eternity ? An answer to the *second* difficulty, will be a complete reply to the *first*. It is beyond our province, to say what is or is not wisest and best for God to do with his own creatures. To contend that sinners do not deserve eternal punishment, is assuming the seat of judgment, which none but JEHOVAH has either the right or the ability to fill. If criminals were permitted to decide on the degree of punishment which they deserve, no doubt, it would be light, and of short duration. But as all sin is against God, He is the only proper judge of its demerit, and of the degree and duration of the misery which his own glory, or the general good, require to be inflicted on the guilty. The feelings of many people, no doubt, revolt at the thought of future and eternal misery ; but they have not a proper sense of the Divine Honor, the evil of sin, and its tendency, unrestrained, to overturn the happiness of the universe. It is a mournful fact, that many, in judging in this case, are more influenced by their own feelings, than by reason and evidence. This lays a foundation for a multitude of wild and unsupported theories. Yes ; to ward off the painful anticipation of the eternal wrath of God, men have recourse to the doctrine of universal sal-

vation ; to the plan of restoration, after a limited future punishment ; and also to the belief of an everlasting annihilation. In these various ways, guilty men are endeavoring to obtain a present and momentary peace. But God solemnly declares, that " though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." Proverbs 11. 21. " Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne ; mercy and truth shall go before His face." Ps. 89. 14. " He is in one mind ; and who can turn Him ?" Job 23. 13. Every obstinate sinner hates to have justice take place in his own case. But we should remember, that our wicked feelings can make no alteration in divine truth. What that is, it will eternally remain to be, without any regard to our unreconciled wishes. To contend with God, because his doctrines are unpleasant to us, is the very height of foolishness. If we are blind to the glory of God in the displays of His justice, He is not. In that case, He proclaims, " As I live, all the earth shall be filled with my glory." Every one of the sinner's subterfuges must ultimately fail him ; and no one of them is more delusive than that of annihilation. But the things that have been mentioned, are, undoubtedly, reasons on which the delusive scheme is founded ; but they are as volatile as air—unsolid as the slippery sand. But,

3. Some equivocal passages of Scripture are pressed into the support of this dangerous doctrine. The very text which we are now investigating, is considered as one of their strong holds. It must be acknowledged, that its phraseology is strong ; but it is certainly capable of more than one construction. It is said in this passage, that God will burn up the wicked ; and that He will leave them neither root nor branch. Annihilation, is one sense which *may* be put upon the text which we are now considering. But it is highly figurative ; and therefore, it should be construed with

great care and modesty ; comparing it with passages which are more plain, and relate to the same subject. It *may* only *mean*, that all the hopes of sinners shall be disappointed, and every vestige of their happiness destroyed, as completely as if they were burned up. The words certainly convey the idea of the entire ruin of the wicked—but that may be perfectly consistent with the doctrine of their endless punishment. But if there were no other passages more clear, the annihilation of sinners might be argued with some degree of plausibility, but not with absolute certainty. There are some other texts, however, on which they appear to rely, that may now be mentioned. One is, 1 Thess. 1. 7—10. It reads thus—“When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power ; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.” This passage is, like the text that has been chosen for our theme, equivocal—capable of a double construction. In accordance with this, are the following passages, “The ungodly are like the chaff, which the wind driveth away—the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment—the way of the ungodly shall perish.” Ps. 1. 4—6. Another sacred writer says, “I went into the sanctuary of God ; then understood I their end.—Thou didst set them in slippery places ; thou castedst them down into destruction.—They are brought into desolation, as in a moment.—They are utterly consumed with terror. As a dream when one awaketh ; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.” Ps. 73. 17—20. “The transgressors shall be destroyed together ; the end of the wicked shall be cut

off." Ps. 37. 38. Many such passages might be collected; but to multiply them is unnecessary. The general arguments for the doctrine of annihilation, have now been exhibited; at least, as far as I have a knowledge of them. The remarks which have been made, apply to all these passages, in respect to their import. To resort to such parts of the Scriptures, in support of the theory of annihilation, is a manifestation that the cause is in distress.

In conformity to my promise, I shall proceed,

II. To confute the scheme by Scriptural arguments.

It is, certainly, the general belief of the Christian world, that the existence of sinners is to be eternal, as well as the existence of the saints. Their faith, in this respect, is founded on the following reasons:

1. There is no *express* declaration in the Bible, that sinners are to be annihilated. The passages on which reliance is placed, by the advocates of that plan, are all ambiguous—capable of another explication. A doctrine of such magnitude, certainly, requires express testimony in its favor. Without this, it is highly presumptuous, either to believe, or advocate it. It is deluding ourselves, and ruining the souls of others. If the doctrine were believed, it would be a powerful inducement to the wicked to pursue their sinful courses, without any thought of repenting, or reforming their lives. It is, therefore, a dangerous and vain expectation.

2. It is very unreasonable to suppose, that an intelligent being should cease to exist. The Psalmist says of man, "Thou hast made him a *little* lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." Ps. 8. 5, 6. God, therefore, must have a higher end to answer by the existence of man, than merely to display his power in his

creation and subsequent annihilation. The Bible assures us, that He "hath made all things for himself." Prov. 16. 4. But if annihilation would be a display of the power and justice of God, in relation to sinners, surely, their eternal punishment will be a much brighter illustration of these infinite perfections. In this case, the universe will eternally behold the unlimited evil of sin—the infinite opposition of God to it; and see the glory of His vindictive justice displayed on the guilty. Sinners are said to be "vessels of wrath;" but this expression would have very little meaning, if they were to be annihilated. The power and justice of God, will be far more conspicuous in supporting their existence in a state of punishment, than they would be in reducing them to their primitive non-entity. Annihilation is but a faint manifestation of the evil of sinning against God, when compared with endless sufferings. There is no need of taking away the being of sinners; for if no good end could be answered by their eternal misery, God could easily renew their minds, pardon their transgressions, and fit them for endless glory. Some of the greatest sinners have been saved by the power and grace of God. Such were Manasseh, the thief on the cross, and others who could be mentioned. Thus we see that one of these great sinners was regenerated and pardoned in his last moments, and in his dying agonies. Men were not created to be annihilated, but to display the justice and mercy of God. If it were inconsistent with unlimited goodness to punish sinners eternally, God would, undoubtedly, display the glory of His mercy in their everlasting salvation. Justice, however, is a divine perfection as well as mercy; and it is as proper that the one should shine forever as the other. If all the enemies of JEHOVAH should be annihilated at the judgment day, it would not set the evil of

sin in such a striking light, in the view of the intelligent universe, as in beholding them constantly and forever suffering the due reward of their iniquity. The conception is too trifling to be cherished for a moment, that God should form intelligent agents to be the mere creatures of a day—to flutter like an atom in the beams of the sun, and then eternally disappear !

3. The painful anticipations which sinners have in relation to futurity, are in direct opposition to the belief of their annihilation. We know that their fears, on this account, are very great and distressing. It is inconsistent to suppose that God, whose benevolence is unlimited, would suffer His rational creatures to be constantly tortured with needless fears. Surely, there is not a hint in all the Scriptures, that the fears of sinners are disproportioned to their danger ; unless it be in having them in too small a degree. But, after all that is said on the pleasing theories of universal salvation ; the future restoration of all men to holiness and happiness ; and on the eternal annihilation of the wicked ; such teachers find it difficult wholly to remove their own fears, or to remove the painful apprehensions of their hearers. “The Holy Scriptures cannot be broken,” which expressly declare, that the wicked “have a certain fearful looking-for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” Heb. 10. 27. Men may reason fallaciously in their own favor ; but conscience, at certain times, will *make them feel*. In opposing the doctrine of eternal punishment, such preachers address the passions and prejudices of their hearers ; but those men who vindicate it, appeal to the conscience, the understanding, and the heart. They are far more vulnerable to truth, than the passions and prejudices of men. It is said of the inspired preachers, that they commended themselves “to every man’s conscience in the sight of

God." Divine truth is armed with a power, to which falsehood can lay no claim. It is "sharper than any two-edged sword"—piercing the hardest heart. Under St. Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost, his hearers "were pricked in their hearts, and said, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2. 37. No such effects were ever witnessed, under the doctrine of eternal annihilation. It is, therefore, a mere anodyne—an intoxicating cup—a draught of poison; it produces death!

4. It is not consistent with the demerit of sin, that its subjects should ever be annihilated. It is committed against God; and as He is a Being of boundless majesty and moral excellency, it must be, in its very nature, an infinite evil. There must, therefore, be some proportion between the crime and the punishment. Surely, the difference between annihilation and endless misery, may be called infinite. It is the very nature of sin to pour contempt on the character of God; and, therefore, the magnitude of its evil must exceed the power of description! If our concern for the Divine Honor were as strong as our prejudices against pain, our vociferation against eternal misery would be completely silenced. The sinner's desert of punishment is just as great as God is glorious, and no more. Just as much, therefore, as we lessen the idea of future punishment, we impair the value of His glory, who created and rules the universe! He saith, "It is an evil and bitter thing to sin against Him," and not to have His fear in our hearts. If it is a proper thing that God should display his own worth in punishing sinners, it is right that He should inflict that degree of it, which is, in an important sense, infinite. No finite being can suffer a punishment which can, in any sense, be called infinite, but by suffering through an unlimited duration. Annihilation would be an instantaneous operation; and in un-

dergoing it, there would be no consciousness of any misery. It would be placing us, in one moment, in that non-entity from which we came. It could hardly be said, in such a case, that sinners were punished; it would be merely losing the reward of righteousness. In this view of the case, the threatenings contained in the Holy Scriptures, evaporate in the air. But we have no right to entertain such an opinion of that, which God saith, "My soul hateth;" and of which, an Apostle says, "It is exceedingly sinful." Eternity, however, will bear witness to the evil and ruinous nature of sin. But,

5. The annihilation of sinners is contrary to the positive declarations of JEHOVAH, in His inspired word. Though the reasons which have been offered against annihilation, have great weight, we do not rely on them as being absolutely conclusive. They make the eternal existence and misery of sinners, however, highly probable. As collateral testimony, they are of sufficient weight to be exhibited. But positive divine assertions need very little corroboration; and to such incontestible evidence we will now resort. Instead of annihilating sinners, Christ informs us, that He will say to them at the judgment seat, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matth. 25. 41. It is added, in the 46th verse, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment." If there were nothing more in the Scriptures, on this subject, these two passages are sufficient to settle it forever. There has been much said to evade the true meaning of the word EVERLASTING; but notwithstanding all their cavils, every scholar must say that it is a powerful—an unlimited expression. The learned and the unlearned irresistibly feel its force.

But we must proceed to further Scriptural testimony on this momentous subject. It is said by the Apostle Jude,

that Sodom and Gomorrah, for their heinous sins against God, "are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." That wicked generation, therefore, had not been annihilated ; but were actually enduring misery in the days of this Apostle ; and had then endured it, for upwards of two thousand years. He does not say that they had suffered, in the past tense ; but that they were then suffering, in the present tense. This passage stands in direct opposition, both to the doctrine of materialism and annihilation. The man who appeared at the marriage feast without a wedding garment, "the King said to his servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matth. 22. 13. This phraseology, in relation to the treatment of sinners after death, is used by Christ four times in the Gospel of Matthew, and once in the Gospel of Luke. "Weeping and gnashing of teeth," are strong expressions of great pain ; and is, therefore, inconsistent with the cessation of existence. It is said by Jesus Christ, "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off : it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched ; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Mark 9. 43, 44. This unequivocal and awful language, is three times repeated in the above-mentioned chapter. The sinner is "the worm," which is said never to die ; and the fire in which he is placed, we see is never to be extinguished. This sacred statement is utterly inconsistent with the doctrine of annihilation.

The case of the rich glutton, also shows that future misery commences immediately after death ; and the passages that have been just quoted, prove that it is to be eternal. Concerning the unhappy rich man, our Lord

saith, that "he died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." Luke 16. 22—24. In relation to the point in view, St. John says, "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night." Rev. 14. The same writer says, "The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever." Rev. 20.

These divine passages clearly show, that neither wicked men nor devils are to be annihilated; but they shall have to exist in misery to eternity. This kind of testimony might be greatly enlarged; but it is altogether unnecessary; for what has been said, is ample and conclusive. There is no such thing as rising up against the evidence which has been advanced, but by an absolute refusal to submit to the decision of the Scriptures. But, I hope, my hearers, that you are not yet prepared to take such a fatal stand. If I know my heart, the object in these discourses has been, to preserve you from placing yourselves in such an awful situation.

The improvement of this subject must be reserved for the next occasion. Take heed, therefore, how ye hear; and prepare to meet your God. AMEN.

SERMON XXIII.

MALACHI IV. 1.

Behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble ; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

IN the foregoing sermon, the annihilation of the wicked, with some of the arguments by which its advocates endeavor to support that theory, have been exhibited. But in opposition to it, such evidence has been adduced, as ought to be deemed sufficient. We may, therefore, consider the everlasting existence, and consequent misery of the finally impenitent, as a doctrine fully established. All that remains to be done, is the

IMPROVEMENT.

1. If sinners are not to be annihilated, but eternally punished, we must conclude that their case is highly alarming. It is impossible for them to flee from God, either in this, or in a future world. As He will not annihilate them, and no others can, they will have to be eternally miserable. If they could, no doubt they would give ten thousand worlds to escape from their existence. They will learn, by a painful experience, that "it is a fearful

thing to fall into the hands of the living God." "He that made them will not have mercy on them, and He that formed them will show them no favor." They are all now under the condemnation of the Almighty. The awful but just sentence will never be revoked, while they continue to oppose the government and law of God. Alas! "enmity against God," is, in truth, the character of man by nature! The opposition is reciprocal, and constantly maintained; and therefore, God saith of sinners, "My soul loathed them, and their souls abhorred me." Zech. 11. 8. As sinners are fatally determined never to yield to God, and as there is no possibility of withstanding his power, their case is truly awful. The language of Heaven to them is, "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the day that I shall deal with thee? I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it." Ezek. 22. 14. In fact, the impenitent will neither be able to endure their misery, nor to flee from it. There could be no such heart-rending expressions used with propriety, if sinners are all to be annihilated at death. No man could be aware of the moment of that event, nor feel the least distress under the operation. The slight anticipations which sinners may have now of such an end, must constitute all their sufferings. This can bear no comparison with having to appear at the bar of God; to see an angry Judge of infinite power; to hear Him say, "Depart from me, ye cursed;" and then to sink into eternal flames! Every unconverted soul is exposed every moment to all the evil that has been described. The Lord saith, "He that believeth not, is condemned already." John 3. 18. No condition can be more alarming than that of an unconverted sinner, until the sentence of Heaven shall have been actually executed. This led an Apostle to say, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." 2 Cor. 5. 11. When

these solemn truths are fastened on the mind, by divine operation, the sinner begins to be awakened. His cry then is, "What shall I do to be saved?" In the view of sin and divine wrath, every degree of his selfish peace is completely destroyed. The apparent peace of a sinful world, is truly surprising. Alas! they have no proper sense of their guilt and danger. They hate to open their ears to the sound of searching preaching, lest their guilty repose should be disturbed. But however great their ease may be, ministers and Christians are alarmed about them; and they cry to God that their perishing souls may be saved. The anxiety of the Christian world is increasing greatly, in respect to the case of sinners; but it is very far from being equal to what it ought to be. There is great need of more copious showers of divine grace, on the church, and on the world. "The glory of God must yet cover the earth, as the waters fill the sea." His people, therefore, are now called in a pressing manner, to unite their prayers and exertions. The command is, "Ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence, and give Him no rest, till He establish, and till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." He is now causing many of His servants to say, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth."

2. If the wicked are not to be annihilated, but eternally punished, we may learn the vast importance of apprising them of their guilt and danger. The Holy Scriptures reflect sufficient light on this mournful case. The universality of sin, and the total depravity of every human being, are truths clearly revealed and powerfully impressed there. At the judgment day, sinners will see that it was not for the want of light, on their own case, that

they remained in darkness. It is a chosen darkness—not liking to retain God in their knowledge—saying to the Almighty, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. God warns men not to sin against Him, by His commandments and prohibitions, by His threatnings and judgments. He presses them to embrace Christ, and to flee from the wrath to come, by the most tender expostulations—the most affecting invitations—and by the glorious promises of eternal life. He has barred the road to endless destruction in such a manner, that it requires great determination and perseverance to reach that dreadful place, which is “prepared for the devil and his angels!” “Why will ye die?” is sounded in the ears of sinners from day to day. The glorious door of salvation, through divine grace, is opened wide to mankind. The Lord may truly say, “What more could I have done for my vineyard, that I have not done in it? When I looked that it should bring forth grapes; wherefore, brought it forth wild grapes?” In a word, every warning that sinners need, is contained in the Scriptures. In addition to these Holy Oracles, He hath appointed religious instructors, to press men with every possible argument, “in season and out of season,” to repent, believe, and turn to God. Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and ordinary ministers have been, and now are, employed in this important business. Their instruction, in all ages, has been, “Say ye to the wicked, It shall be *ill* with him.” But to penitents, they have always been directed to say, in the name of the Lord, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Isa. 1. 18. To the obstinate, they have always been directed to proclaim, that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousnes of men—to say, “Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the

Jew first, and also of the Gentile.” Rom. 1. 18. chap. 2. 5. It is the united voice of the ministers of the word, “ Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.” 2 Cor. 5. 20. The Scriptures contain suitable instructions for uninspired ministers, in relation to all the duties which are incumbent on them. They are required to explain and enforce every doctrine, duty, promise and threatening, contained in their instructions; and to inform men, how they may obtain happiness and avoid misery. In this case, their instructions are ample; being no less than the whole word of God. They have no discretionary power in this matter—no right to depart from their instructions in the least degree. They are neither to add nor diminish, on the pain of God’s eternal displeasure; for He saith, “ If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book. And if any man take away from the words of the book—God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” Rev. 22. 18, 19. They are the best instructors, who adhere the most closely to the divine rule, in their life and doctrine. They have ample room to display all the talents they may possess, in study, argument and persuasion. There is no want of sufficient materials to convince men of sin—to apprise them of their danger, and to show them the way of life, if they themselves have an experimental acquaintance with God—with their own hearts, and with the Holy Scriptures. To leave any thing undone, which is in their power to do to convince sinners, is extremely wicked. The ministers of the glorious gospel, need great knowledge—they should be very active; and feel at all times the constraining love of Christ. They are appointed to

watch for souls, and they must give an account to God for all their ministrations. To have immortal souls perish through their neglect, is an affecting consideration. Their hearts should be filled with benevolence to men; zeal for the glory of God, and the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom, should animate them to unwearied exertions. In instructing and warning men, no opportunity should be neglected. The harvest truly is great; but faithful laborers are few. It is a glorious thing to be employed, as humble instruments, in saving the souls of men. They will be crowns of joy to faithful ministers, in the day of Christ. Every thing should be done, so that, if sinners are lost, the fault may be their own.

3. If the wicked are not to be annihilated, but eternally punished, we may see the great iniquity of deceiving them. False doctrines lead to death—eternal death! It is, therefore, highly criminal to tell sinners, that all they have to dread is annihilation. They would not very generally adopt such pernicious principles, unless they were inculcated by learned, artful, studious, and active men. It is true of such teachers, that “they are wise to do evil; but to do good, they have no knowledge.” Alas! “they know not what they do!” The depravity of their hearts makes them reason on divine subjects in a manner that is unworthy of the learning and abilities which they possess. In this fallen world, many whose natural powers and acquirements are eminent, appear to be profoundly ignorant in respect to the interesting science of divinity. In their case, that apostolical saying is true, “Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.” Eph. 4. 18. As they do not love to retain God in their knowledge, they rack their minds to invent schemes which are adapted to soothe their

own fears, and to relieve the feelings of other sinners. It is, however, a very wicked employment to be "crying peace when there is no peace." But when men will venture to teach such smooth and delusive doctrines, there always will be some who "love to have it so;" but as a prophet says, "What will be the end thereof?" Such deceivers of mankind are in danger of something worse than annihilation, even eternal damnation. If, as Solomon says, "he that winneth souls is wise," we may be assured, that he who ruins them, is exceedingly foolish. If the men who turn many to righteousness, "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever;" we may infer, that corrupting the principles, debasing the morals of men, and fitting them for eternal destruction, must sink the agents into the blackness of darkness forever. In hearing that sinners are to be annihilated, and not eternally punished, many may venture on the commission of crimes, which, under different views, they would never have perpetrated. The belief of annihilation must be dangerous to the peace of society, as well as to the salvation of the soul. If, as has been proved, the notion is false in theory, and pernicious in its effects, inculcating it must be a high-handed act of iniquity. Every benevolent heart, therefore, should reprobate the promulgating of it, as a thing dishonorable to God, injurious to community, and calculated to populate the region of endless despair! But it is truly said by St. Paul, that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." Dangerous errors, however, must be opposed in the spirit of the Gospel; yet, with perspicuity, ardor and perseverance. Bitterness is not admissible, however wicked, erroneous, and inimical to us, its abettors may be. It is the voice of God, "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, pa-

tient, in meekness instructing those who oppose." In contending with heretics, it should be remembered, that we are, by nature, the enemies of God, even as others. If we have embraced the truth, it has been through Divine grace; and, therefore, we have no right to glory over any of our fellow men. We are bound to pray for the most erroneous and sinful part of men. It is our duty, however, to convince them, if possible, of their guilt and danger; for that is an act of real benevolence.

4. If sinners are not to be annihilated, but eternally punished, we may learn the importance of their being convinced of these things. No man is called upon to believe any thing without sufficient evidence. In the investigation of a subject of this nature, we may set this down as a fact, that there is no conclusive evidence of it, but in the Scriptures. No doubt, God can annihilate any thing that He has made; but whether He *will*, or will *not* annihilate sinners, our reason is incompetent to determine. The Bible, therefore, is the only rule by which the matter can be decided. The advocates for annihilation, we have seen, have recourse to Scripture for the support of their theory. Great care, therefore, should be taken in studying that Book, not to draw from it any improper conclusions. It must be allowed, that many different systems are professedly built upon that foundation. This must convince us, that many are wresting the sacred pages from their true meaning; for they cannot support opposite doctrines. To believe that those writings are obscure, would be a great reflection on their glorious Author. But if that is not the case, it must certainly follow, that many are not faithful to themselves, in the examination of that inspired Volume. By detaching a passage from its connection, and forcing a literal meaning on words that are highly figurative, and capable of different constructions, *any* thing may be easily

proved. But when we see a doctrine supported by express and unequivocal Scripture testimony, it must not be set aside, because doubtful passages are urged against it. It is an excellent rule of interpretation, to settle the meaning of doubtful texts by such as are clear and express; and not to explain away the meaning of positive assertions, by passages that are figurative, and capable of different solutions. By proceeding in such a preposterous way, many have deceived themselves and others. When passages are adduced to prove a theory, that is in itself congenial with the reigning depravity of the heart, their application may be consistently doubted. It is not to be expected, that divine truth will ever be flattering to human pride, nor pleasing to sinners. We have seen, that the eternal punishment of the finally impenitent, is supported by express declarations of Scripture; and, therefore, the passages which are pressed into the service of an opposite hypothesis, are, undoubtedly, misconstrued, and improperly applied. If we were honest, we might very easily settle the point in question. It is the deceitfulness of the heart, that presents the subject in a doubtful light, or determines the mind in favor of the doctrine of annihilation. It is wicked and dangerous to be halting between these opinions. Placing ourselves before the throne of God, with the Bible open in our view, and our hand upon our heart, let this great question be settled; for, in such a solemn attitude, we will, undoubtedly, come to a proper conclusion. Conscience testifies in favor of such a method of procedure; but, alas! the heart of the sinner is *against* it! He hates to be disquieted. It is much better, however, to tremble now, than to tremble at the sound of the last trumpet. Instead of annihilation, Jesus Christ saith, "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth: they that have

done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”—John 5. 28, 29.

Thus an attempt has been made, in four discourses, to reflect some light on this momentous subject. It is a duty, my hearers, which I owe to you, and I have endeavored to discharge it, I hope, with some degree of faithfulness. Let it rest upon your minds, that you must shortly give an account unto God for your conclusions, in relation to this subject. According to the best of my ability, I have tried to acquit my conscience in this matter. There is no indecision in my own mind, concerning the *immateriality* and *immortality* of the soul; nor about the eternal punishment of those who die in opposition to God. The careful examination of the opposite theory, has served to establish my former principles, if possible, more firmly. We must consider all other *supposed* evidence but the Scriptures, as being irrelevant to this subject. The doctrines which have been vindicated in these discourses, are firmly supported by that standard which ought to be sufficient evidence in our view.

5. If the wicked are not to be annihilated, but eternally punished, we may see how important it is, that they should become righteous immediately. As all men have sinned, it is a fact that they cannot become innocent; yet, there is a way in which they may be justified; and that is through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ. On this, St. Paul says, “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Rom. 5. 1. He was “made sin—a sin offering—for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Cor. 5. 21. He is able, therefore, to save to the uttermost, even the greatest of sinners, who come to God by Him. Repentance and faith are the con-

ditions on which salvation is suspended; and these conditions may be easily performed by the willing mind. We are placed under such circumstances, that if we perish, our criminality will be great. It is no small consolation to know, that we may be as completely happy, and God as fully glorified, as if we had never sinned, through the atonement and intercession of Christ. Well might the angel say to the shepherds, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2. 10, 11. It is far more easy to repent, believe and prepare for heaven, than it is to vindicate the gloomy doctrine of annihilation, with its dependant and kindred errors. As far as that is believed, it is an effectual bar against all holy repentance. Eternal salvation, my hearers, is effected through grace, in opposition to every scheme of self-righteousness. There is no such thing as standing before God, on the ground of works, for the voice of his justice is, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, written in the book of the law to do them." Gal. 3. 10. Again it is said, he that "offendeth in one point is guilty of all." James 2. 10. This cuts off every plea that can be made, on the ground of merit. "It is through faith we are saved; that it may be of grace; that the promise may be sure to all the seed"—the chosen of the Lord. All that is required of us, therefore, is to accept of mercy through the great Redeemer. To be righteous, in the gospel sense of the term, signifies one whose heart is renewed—whose sins are pardoned, and whose person and services are accepted in Christ, the Great Head of the Church. The greatest sinner on earth, may become a saint instantaneously. The difference between these characters is simply this; the one hates an infinitely Holy God, and the other loves Him.

on account of that purity and glory. As there can be no medium between hatred and love, the Christian character must be formed in one moment. The very first exercise of holy love involves every other Christian grace in its very nature. The transition, therefore, from a state of moral death and condemnation, to holiness and eternal happiness, must be more sudden than the lightning.

Though holiness in man is the fruit of the Spirit's operation, it consists in the voluntary exercises of his own heart; and, on that account, he is as really a free agent as if it were self caused. This doctrine makes the creature entirely dependent; but it does not annihilate his moral liberty, nor exonerate him from being responsible to his God. To plead for any greater liberty in the case of men, is contending for that which is peculiar to Jehovah; namely, independence, which is in fact incommunicable. It is no dishonor to the glorious name of God, to say, that He cannot form a creature, who shall in any respect be independent of Himself. As man is a free and moral agent, he is a proper subject of commands and prohibitions—threatenings and promises; and actually blamable for remaining one moment longer the enemy of God. In this view of the subject, it is the indispensable duty of every sinner to be a converted soul, before he draws another breath. The imperative requirement of Heaven is, "Make you a new heart, and a new spirit;" and therefore, to live without this glorious change, is the summit of disobedience. If we have a right to continue without that, which God commands us to possess; it must follow, that no other divine precept is absolutely binding. An opposite doctrine sets all things afloat in the moral world. A strict dependence on JEHOVAH, for all our moral exercises, is, therefore, consistent with moral freedom and obligation. As *there is no such thing to be expected as annihilation, it is*

high time to lay aside our vain apologies, and submit to God on divine principles. It must be a very rebellious mind, that leads people to believe in the gloomy—the delusive—the horrid doctrine of annihilation. It grows out of a desire to escape from the justice of God : it consists in a total disregard of His glory. It is as necessary that the sinner's existence should be continued, to display the vindictive justice of the Almighty, as it is, that the saints should live forever, to illustrate the riches of His mercy and grace. He will not lose any of His glory in the case of His creatures ; for “ the wrath of men shall praise Him.” In accents of glorious majesty, He proclaims to the universe, “ My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” Isa. 46. 10. As “ the Lord reigneth ; let the earth rejoice ; let the multitude of the Isles be glad thereof.” Ps. 97. 1. It is also said, “ the Lord reigneth ; let the people tremble : He sitteth between the cherubim ; let the earth be moved.” Ps. 99. 1. “ Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne ; righteousness and truth go before His face ; but there is forgiveness with Him, that His name may be feared.” The holy angels veil their faces before Him ; and in his glorious presence, devils tremble ! All on earth are commanded to fear His name, with a holy fear ; because with God, there is terrible Majesty ! He covereth Himself with light, as with a garment—light that infinitely outshines the sun in all its meridian splendor !

There is no such thing for sinners as annihilation ; nor any possibility of escaping from the eye of God ! They may forfeit eternal happiness, by a persevering rejection of Christ and His salvation ; but they can never cease to exist. As you will never, my hearers, be annihilated, let no time be lost in preparing to meet your God in peace ; and let every voice in this assembly, say, AMEN.

SERMON XXIV.

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ACTS II. 36.

Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.

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IN the early part of last summer, I was requested by a gentleman, whose sentiments are opposed to the proper Deity of Christ, to preach from these words; giving me at the same time a promise, that if I would let him know when the discourse would be delivered, he would honor me with his attendance. Various avocations have prevented me until now, from complying with his request. It is his opinion, no doubt, that the passage before us, is inconsistent with Trinitarian sentiments, in respect to the person of Christ. Did I suppose, there was *one* text in the volume of inspiration, in opposition to Christ's supreme Divinity, I should no longer remain a Trinitarian. But as the words under consideration, are undoubtedly supposed to be so by the gentleman alluded to, and his brethren in opinion; I am pleased with having an opportunity of pointing out their mistake. Every one who is serving God in the work of the ministry, is directed by St. Paul, to "be gentle unto all men; apt to teach, patient; in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves: if God peradventure will

give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." If this discourse should, by the blessing of God, serve to convince the gentleman who desired it, or any of similar sentiments, the advantage will be their own; and the glory will be wholly due to Him, who is mighty to save.

But to enter on the subject, I would premise that it does not appear to have been the apostle's main design, when preaching to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, to discuss directly, all the views which he entertained of Christ's Person. They had put him to death as a criminal; openly denying his having any commission from on high. It was their uniform plea, that he imposed on mankind, in asserting that he was sent of God. They expected, indeed, the coming of the Messiah, predicted by their prophets; but they refused to acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth, as the *one*, sustaining that exalted character. This seems to have been the only point, which the inspired preacher was endeavoring to establish in their minds, at that time. It would have been useless to enter with them into the Messiah's Deity, while they rejected the claim of the crucified Jesus; altogether, to be the Messiah. With respect to the character of the real Messiah, it is not probable, that they were prepared to dispute with him, who was then addressing them. His proper Deity appears to be well authenticated in their Scriptures; and, no doubt, the Jews fully understood them, in that respect.

They seemed to be in the dark, however, in regard to the main design of the Messiah's mission; viz: that he was to suffer, die, rise from the grave, and ascend to heaven. To convince them, respecting these things, St. Peter refers to a prophecy, delivered by David, the most illustrious king who ever sat on the throne of Israel; and who was one of the brightest types of their Messiah. The prophecy, in view, is contained in the 16th Psalm, and the

an appellation for a *mere creature* to sustain. But the uncreated glory of this Angel, appears with more clearness in Exodus 23. 20, 21. There, God saith to Moses, "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, and provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions; for my name is in him." Such statements respecting his character and offices, are certainly pre-eminent marks of divine dignity. The Deity of this Angel appears with greater force of evidence, however, in Exodus, the 3d chapter. It is, with awful solemnity, stated there, "And the Angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned. And when the Lord—that is, JEHOVAH, as it is in the original—saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses: Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." When this same Angel appeared unto Abraham, he called him "the Lord, the Judge of all the earth;" acknowledging himself to be but dust and ashes in his presence. For an understanding of this statement, permit me to refer you to the 18th chapter of Genesis. When this Almighty Angel addressed Joshua, the commander of the armies of Israel, he styled himself the Captain of the Lord's host; and commanded this Hebrew officer to worship him by the highest act of reverence *which* was then in use, viz. uncovering the feet. The

account at large is recorded in the 5th chapter of Joshua. But while the supreme Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ is announced in the Scriptures which have been quoted, they sufficiently show the *subordination* of his office to that of the Father. Our Lord Jesus Christ asserted repeatedly, that he was *sent* by the Father; and that the Father, in *that* respect, was greater than himself. In testimony of this doctrine, citations from the Holy Scriptures might easily be multiplied. It is needless, however, to enlarge on this head; for the thing in view is sufficiently clear. But in *no other sense but that of office*, is Christ, in his Divine nature, either inferior or subordinate to the Father.

2. It is necessary now to show in what sense the Lord Jesus Christ is dependent on God. It must be allowed, that in respect to his body and soul, Christ is a *real man*, and as dependent on the Deity, as any other created being in the universe. It is in his human nature that he was crucified; for the Divine nature could not die. Jesus our Lord, gloried in being the *Son of man*, as well as the *Son of God*. To exhibit a long list of passages in proof of this, is unnecessary to people who are in the habit of reading the Scriptures. As this is greatly labored by our Anti-Trinitarian opponents, we are fully prepared to meet them here, with our cordial assent. It would be a mournful event to us, if the humanity of Christ could not be maintained. It is distinctly stated in the epistle to the Hebrews, that "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death." No *mere man*, can, with any propriety, be said to take "flesh and blood;" for that implies existence antecedent to the event. It appears with irresistible evidence, that each person in the Triune God, acted in giving being to the human nature of Christ. It is well

known that his conception is ascribed to the Holy Ghost; and to the Father, the Son is represented as saying, "A body hast *thou* prepared me;" and we have seen that it is asserted by an apostle, that he himself "took flesh and blood." Thus the human nature of Christ, was evidently created by the Deity, who raised him from the dead, and will continue to support his existence through eternity. When the apostle informed the Jews, that "God had *made* that Jesus whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ," he evidently meant him, who is called "the *man* Christ Jesus." In making him Lord, he laid the government of all things upon his shoulder. As man, his reign over all is manifestly derived from God. In this capacity, he is the mediator, and exercises under God, a mediatorial government; but it is at present as extensive as the universe. It is on this ground, the apostle felt himself warranted to say, "He is Lord of all." When he was about to ascend to heaven, he said to his disciples, "All power in heaven and on earth, is given unto me." Having "poured out his soul unto death, God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow." We are ever ready to admit, that as a man, Christ is a dependent being, and that his government in that capacity, is as dependent on God, as the human part of his person. It is on this ground St. Paul said to the saints, "Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Having received his government as a mediator from the Father, he certainly exercises it in a strict dependence on the power of God; and when all its grand ends shall be accomplished, he is to resign it again into the Divine hand. This doctrine is clearly illustrated in the 15th chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the Corinthians. In speaking of God, he states there, that "He hath put all things under Christ's feet." This

inspired writer adds likewise, "But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him who did put all things under *him*, that God may be all in all." In this sublime sense, "the kingdom" shall ultimately be delivered up to God; and Christ "shall put down all rule, and all authority, and power," as a mediator between God and man. In the view of his present government, Christ saith to his faithful servants, "He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:—even as I received of my Father." Nothing can be more plain, therefore, than that Christ in this sense is inferior and subordinate to the Father; and as a man and a mediator, he is wholly dependent on God for his being and government. As a man and a mediator, God hath set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all the things to the Church, which is *his* body, the fulness of him who filleth all in all." But such a glorious exaltation, would be utterly improper for him as a man, without being *one person* with "the Word, who was in the beginning with God, and was God." It is by his divine power, he is able to discharge the mighty offices, with which he is clothed as a man and a Redeemer. These things cannot be accounted for on any other principle. But for the further illustration of the subject, some general remarks will be made. And,

1. From the view which has now been taken of it, we may infer, that the text under consideration furnishes no argument against the Trinitarian system. As the things

that have been mentioned, are all true in relation to the economy of redemption, and the complex Person of Jesus Christ, it must be expected that the Holy Scriptures will speak accordingly. In opposing any given scheme of theology, it is highly necessary to understand it in all its principles, bearings, and relations. If this is not the case, many things will be urged as arguments, which are wholly inapplicable to the subject in debate. If Trinitarians believed in an equality of offices, as well as perfections, in the different Persons in the Godhead ; if they denied the humanity, mediatorial government, and dependence of Christ on God in *all* respects ; then we must acknowledge, the text which has been given to me as the theme of this discourse, would operate against them with irresistible energy. We are fully apprised, that gentlemen of Anti-Trinitarian sentiments plead, that the distinctions which have been made, are *all mere art and evasion* ; but we distinctly and solemnly deny the justness of the charge. If we had no such opposition to face, we should still go on in speaking of the complex Person of our glorious Redeemer, in the very same manner. It is as important for us to support these inferior views of his Person, as to vindicate his proper Deity. As he sustains our nature as well as God's, he must, like us, be subordinate and dependent. The distinctions which have been made at this time, account very fully for all the acknowledgments of inferiority to the Father, which Jesus made when he was on the earth, and for all the prayers which he addressed to his throne.

But *how* human nature can be united in one identical person with the Divine, we do not pretend to determine. It is a mystery, and must remain among the secret things of God, which belong to himself, and not to us. We believe the doctrine, on the authority of Him who cannot lie ; readily admitting, that in this case, we have no desire

to lean to our own understanding. Although we cannot see *how* the transcendently glorious Persons of the eternal and infinite Trinity are united in one simple and undivided essence, nor *how* the second Person is united to the "Man Christ Jesus;" yet we evidently see the importance of these mysteries, in relation to the glory of God, and our eternal salvation; and that is amply sufficient for all *our* purposes in the present life.

2. From the view which has been taken of this subject, we may very consistently infer, that Anti-Trinitarians cannot give so clear an answer, to the serious difficulties which lie against their views of Christ's Person. Do the Scriptures say that Christ is subordinate to the Father, and dependent on God? we freely admit these things; and we are able notwithstanding, to show their entire consistency with Trinitarian doctrines. It is well known that the holy Scriptures declare his co-equality with the Father as explicitly, as his subordination and dependence.

In the Epistle to the Phil. 2. 5, 6. the apostle saith to Christians, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God; thought it not robbery to be equal with God." The opposers of the supreme Deity of Christ, cannot show the consistency of this text with their system; and, therefore, there is no way left them, but to bear upon it with all the battering engines of fallacious criticism, that human art can devise. They are equally perplexed with many other passages. To convince yourselves of this, you have no more to do, than to cast your eyes on "the improved version of the New-Testament," as it is inconsistently called. In respect to the doctrine in question, its authors have scarcely left a resemblance between it and the English translation. But we are not under the necessity, of resorting to the arts of doubtful criticism, to evade the proofs adduced by our

opponents for the subordination and dependence of Christ ; for they are easily explained in perfect accordance with our theory. But alas! what can be done by them with the following passages, without much critical art, and disingenuous evasion? “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” “All things were made by him.” “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory.” John 1. 1, 3, 14. “I and my Father are one.” John 10. 30. “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.” “Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?” John 14. 9, 10. “For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” Col. 1. 16, 17. “Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever.” Rom. 9. 5. But unto the Son, he saith, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.” “And let all the angels of God worship him.” Heb. 1. 6, 8. “That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.” John 5. 23. “This is the true God, and eternal life.” 1 John 5. 20. “And all the churches shall know, that I am he, that searcheth the reins and the heart.” Rev. 2. 23. “These things saith the first and the last, who was dead and is alive.” Rev. 2. 8. There is a sense, therefore, in which Christ is equal with God, and a sense, in which he is unequal; a sense in which he is independent, and a sense in which he is dependent and inferior. This double view of his glorious Person, makes every part of Scripture clear, in relation to our scheme; but it leaves that of our opponents, in a cloud of darkness, so thick that it may be felt. On our plan, he

is God, and he is man : but on their's, he is a man only. To explain all "the Scriptures of truth," in consistency with his *simple humanity*, is really a Herculean task. It requires all the learning and researches of their most subtle doctors, and their combined exertions through all ages, to give even plausibility to the scheme ; and after all that they *can do*, the doctrine will be disbelieved by people, who are willing to look into the Bible with an impartial eye, and to set aside their own vain philosophy. It is now too late, to think of spreading very extensively such a deleterious scheme, in opposition to the light that is prevailing in the world, in connection with the extensive operations of God's Spirit. This is an age of salvation.

3. From the view which we have taken of this subject, we may infer, that every objection made to well established principles, must fall to the ground. It must be admitted, that plausible objections may be raised by studious and artful men, to every system of politics, ethics, philosophy, religion, or any other science that can be named. If we must disbelieve every thing that is called in question, nothing would be true. The supreme divinity of Christ, is better established by the Scriptures, than the first principles of any of the sciences. It is founded on the testimony of God ; and that is the highest possible evidence. To think of retaining the Scriptures, and rejecting this doctrine, is really chimerical. If this doctrine must be given up, as a thing incompatible with reason, let the book which evidently contains it, fall with it. Consistency requires the sacrifice. The doctrine, however, is not contrary to reason ; but it is infinitely above it ; and, therefore, it is an object of faith, and not of sense. But human pride is unwilling, in this case, to submit to divine revelation. The principle is first assumed, that Christ cannot *be* God ; and then the Scriptures must be put on the rack, to make

them acknowledge it. But to entertain incorrect conceptions of Christ's Person, is really a dangerous error. If he is the supreme God, to undeify him, is a bold undertaking; and if he is nothing but a man, *we* are gross idolators. "What think ye of Christ?" is a question of the first magnitude. May the Lord prepare us all to give it a proper answer. AMEN.

THE END.

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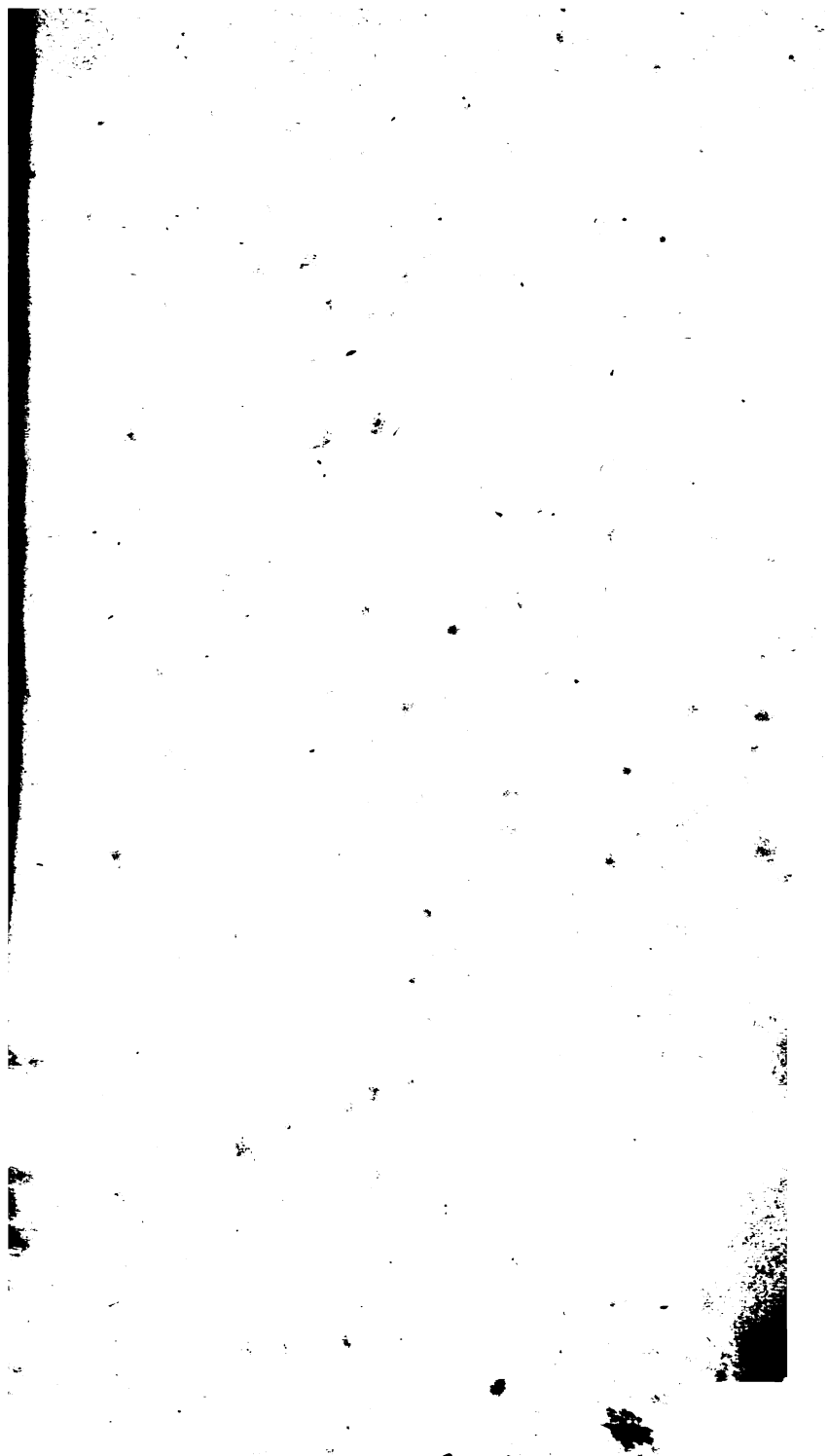
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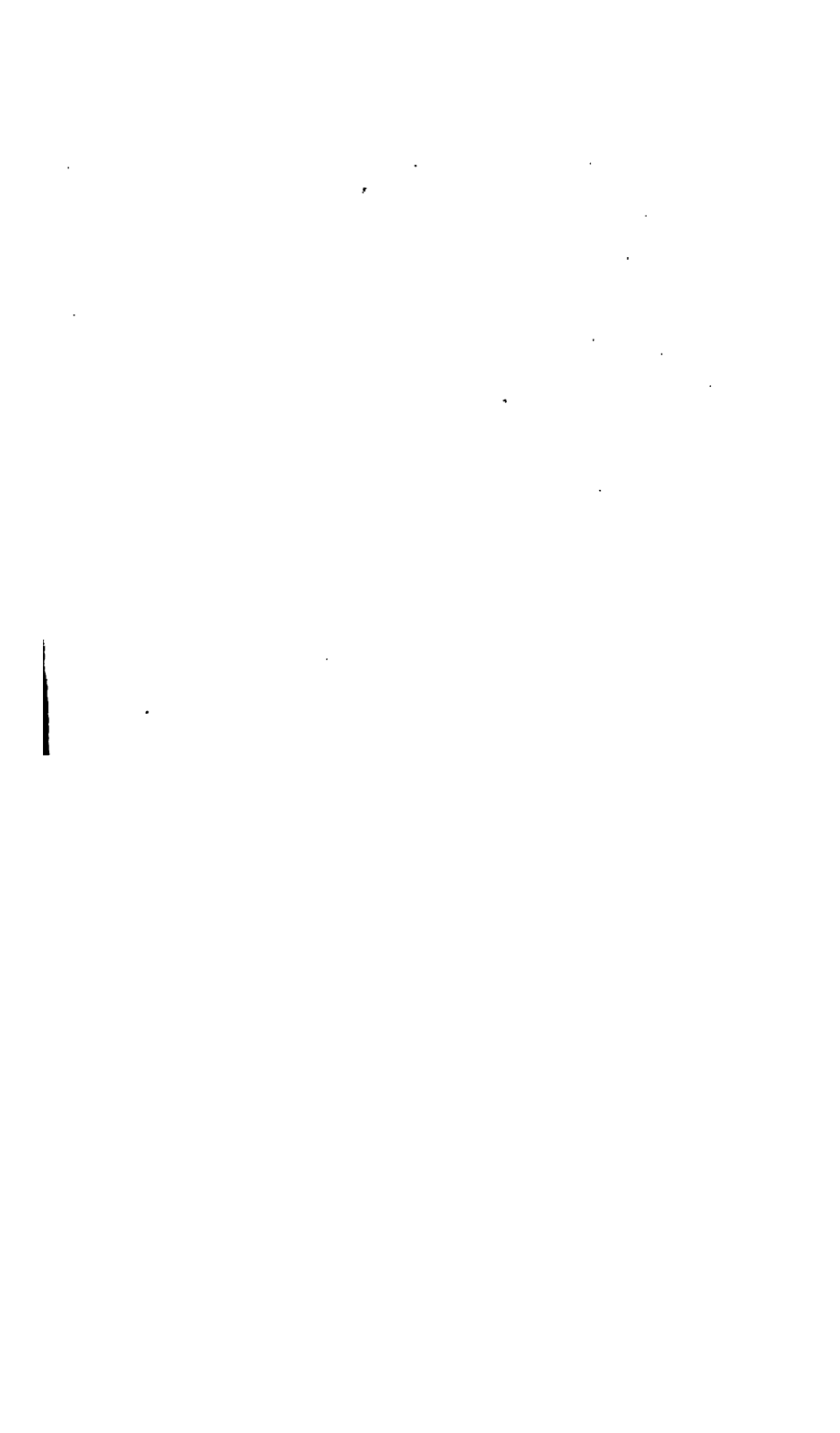
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